

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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LIMITS TO CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IN A FRAGILE AND
CONFLICT AFFECTED STATE – A CASE STUDY OF AFGHANISTAN 2002–2012

DEFENCE COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

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Supervisor: Professor Ann Fitzgerald

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Abstract

This research examined the challenges, decisions, issues, and dilemmas facing the International Community (IC) in attempting to re-establish and rebuild public administration and other government institutions in a country that continues to suffer from instability and remains at high risk of further conflict. The research looks specifically at a subset of Public Administration Reform (PAR): Civil Service and Administrative Reform (CSAR). The research concludes that CSAR in a Fragile and Conflict Affected State (FCAS) such as Afghanistan is clearly a ‘wicked problem’ requiring innovative, iterative and adaptive responses by the IC over an extended time period. However, the IC treats CSAR in Afghanistan as a ‘tame’ problem simply framed in terms of ‘we are coming to build your capacity’, resulting in slow progress on public sector reform overall and little understanding of the relationship with overarching statebuilding and stabilisation objectives. Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of CSAR, IC support has fallen dramatically in recent years. The current approach to supporting CSAR in Afghanistan is therefore almost guaranteed to fail. The research calls for a new approach to PAR in these types of cases, one that recognises the severe limits to progress utilising existing approaches and structures rooted in Western notions of good government. A new approach goes beyond the overwhelming focus on capacity development; emphasises the importance of understanding what space exists for reform; recognises the need to pragmatically confront trade-offs between the competing objectives of reconciling stabilisation imperatives with wider considerations of ‘good governance’; and poses an alternative expanded framework for considering public administration, legitimacy, authority and representation in the government of an FCAS, partly as an organising framework but also as an aid to understanding the complexity of interrelated systems prevalent in an FCAS. The research also concludes that a great deal more independent academic research is required to understand how to make progress in Public Sector Reform (PSR), stabilisation and longer-term development that will help prevent countries slipping back into conflict.

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Spelling Note

There are differences in use of US and UK English in civil–military parlance. Therefore certain key words such as ‘stabilisation’ are spelt in different ways depending on the document quoted. Throughout the thesis the United States of America is referred to as the US

List of Acronyms and Glossary of Terms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIA	Afghan Interim Authority (sometime referred to as Afghan Interim Administration)
AMP	Aid Management Policy
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AREU	Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit
ARTF	Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASGP	Afghan Sub-National Governance Programme
ASI	Adam Smith International
ASOP	Afghan Social Outreach Programme
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBR	Capacity Building for Results
CERP	Commanders' Emergency Response Programme
COIN	Counterinsurgency (Operations)
CoM	Council of Ministers
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CSA	Civil Service Agency
CSAR	Civil Service and Administrative Reform
CSC	Civil Service Commission (abbreviation for IARCSC)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Civil Service Reform
CTAP	Civilian Technical Assistance Programme
DDP	District Delivery Program
DDP	District Delivery Plan
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DG	District Governor
DP	Development Partner
EAS	European Administrative Space
EC	European Commission
ECF	Enhanced Credit Facility
EFS	Externally Financed Salaries
EU	European Union
ER	Early Recovery
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict Affected State
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRA	Fiduciary Risk Assessment
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HDI	Human Development Index
HMEP	Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme

HOO	High Office of Oversight
HR	Human Resources
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IC	International Community
ICP	IDA Country Performance (ratings)
IDA	International Development Association
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group (World Bank)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Inteqal	‘Transition’ (in both Dari and Pashtu languages)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISPMS	Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems
LEP	Lateral Entry Program
LSE	London School of Economics
MAC	Ministerial Advisory Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCP	Management Capacity Program
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
Mustufiat	Provincial Offices of the Ministry of Finance
NA	Northern Alliance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPM	New Public Management
NPP	National Priority Programme
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
NTA	National Technical Assistance
NVRA	National Vulnerability and Resource Assessment
OAA	Office of Administrative Affairs
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
P&G	Pay and Grading (IARCSC)
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PB	Peace Building
PC	Provincial Council
PCPI	Post-Conflict Indicators Framework
PCRU	Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFEM	Public Finance and Expenditure Management
PFM	Public Financial Management
PFMA	Public Financial Management and Accountability
PG	Provincial Governor
PGO	Provincial Governor’s Office

PRR	Priority Reform and Restructuring (IARCSC)
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSM	Public Sector Management
PSR	Public Sector Reform
SB	State Building
SEPAP	Second Emergency Public Administration Programme
SFA	Strategic Framework for Afghanistan
SG	Secretary General (of the United Nations)
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SIKA	Stabilisation in Key Areas
SNG	Sub-National Governance
SNGP	Sub-National Governance Policy
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TA	Technical Assistance
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TMAF	Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework
TMPA	Traditional Model of Public Administration
TQM	Total Quality Management
Tashkeel	Civil Service Staffing Complement
TCC	Transition Coordinating Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank Group
WDR	World Development Report
WGA	Whole of Government Approach
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators

SELECTED GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary has been compiled from a number of sources including evaluations, government aid management documents (co-authored by G. J. Wilson), strategies and line ministry documents. The origins of some of the terms are therefore quoted in numerous Afghan government documents. Others equate reasonably well with other international definitions.

Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)

The Afghanistan National Development Strategy is the central framework for Afghanistan's development, aiming to promote pro-poor growth, support the development of democratic processes and institutions, and reduce poverty and vulnerability. It was eventually completed in 2008.

Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF)

The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund is a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism and is composed of two windows: a recurrent window for partially supporting the Government's operational costs, and the investment window to support the Government's development budgets. ARTF, which is administered by the World, aims to position the national budget as the key vehicle to align the reconstruction programme with national development objectives, promoting transparency and accountability as well as enhancing donor coordination for financing and policy dialogue.

Civil Society Organisations (CSO)

Afghanistan's non-government organisations, established for development purposes to include community organisations, women's groups, trades unions, private sector associations, social movements and advocacy groups.

Core Budget (CB)

The Core Budget is the national budget of the Government, prepared and administered by the Ministry of Finance. It includes all planned expenses and revenues in a fiscal year. The core budget consists of development and operating budgets.

Development Assistance Database (DAD)

An online information-sharing tool containing all data on development assistance provided to Afghanistan, whether through the national treasury ('Core Budget' or 'On-budget') or external channels ('External Budget' or 'Off-budget'). It allows the Government and DPs to share information, and undertake analysis and reports based on their needs.

Development Cooperation

The financial and technical assistance provided by all development partners (governments, multilateral organisations and non-governmental organisations) to Afghanistan.

Development Partners (DPs)

All partner governments or organisations that provide development cooperation to Afghanistan, including OECD donors, South-South providers, multilateral organisations, vertical funds and NGOs.

Financing Agreements (FA)

An agreement signed on a specific programme/project between the Ministry of Finance and a particular development partner, which creates obligations on both sides for performing particular duties.

Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB)

The high-level dialogue between the Afghan Government and the IC for overall strategic coordination on implementation of the Afghanistan Compact endorsed at the London Conference in 2006. JCMB provides a platform for strategic coordination, joint policy formulation and problem-solving in Afghanistan and ensures the mutual accountability of the Government and its development partners.

ISAF

The International Assistance Task Force has as its mission statement: “In support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, ISAF conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socioeconomic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population” (<http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html>).

International Community (IC)

The International Community is defined as those governments and international organisations combining their efforts to support stabilisation and recovery strategy, policy and actions in conflict-affected situations.

Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF)

The Medium Term Budget Framework is an approach to budgeting which links the spending plans of government to its policy objectives. The main feature of an MTBF, compared to MTEF, is that it recommends expenditure priorities and splits overall fiscal envelope (available resources) by budgetary units (defines budget unit ceilings) for the medium term. MTBF provides analysis of government policies, which results in allocation of funds to where they are most needed and the funds being allocated to the highest priorities.

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)

The matrix used by government to strategically allocate financial resources (its own revenues and aid) amongst programmes and projects and link allocations with outputs.

National Priority Programmes (NPPs)

National Priority Programmes are a set of 22 priority programmes announced at the Kabul Conference of 2010. NPPs represent a prioritisation and further focusing of the ANDS, including specific deliverables and costing.

On-budget

On-budget funding refers to resources (domestic revenues and donor funding) included in the GIRA's national budget. On-budget funding means that in principle GIRA systems and procedures are applied.

Off-budget

Off-budget is all funding not included in the GIRA's national budget. Off-budget donor funding applies the public financial management systems and procedures of the individual donors.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

This includes all official transactions that are administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective, and that are concessional in character and convey a grant element of at least 25%.

Project Implementation Units (PIUs)

Units established by DPs to implement specific projects or programmes. These may be either parallel to government implementation structures, or partly integrated into them.

Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)

A Provincial Reconstruction Team is a unit consisting of military officers, diplomats, and reconstruction subject matter experts, engaged in development projects through their reconstruction groups such as Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC)) and Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in the country.

Public Finance Management (PFM) Roadmap

A plan that aims to strengthen the ability of government to effectively design and implement programming while demonstrating the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

It focuses on:

- strengthening the budget in driving effective delivery of key priority outcomes
- improving budget execution
- increasing accountability and transparency
- increasing the capacity of line ministries to implement programmes effectively and efficiently.

Standing Committees (SC)

These are high-level fora formed under JCMB to discuss and make decisions on security, governance, rule of law, human rights, social and economic development as well as aid coordination and effectiveness. These include standing committees on 1) Security, 2) Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights and 3) Social and Economic Development.

Tashkeel

The civil service staff establishment tables. Tashkeel is the official civil service staffing system in Afghanistan. It is developed by the ministries and approved by the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Commission as part of the budget process.

Technical Assistance (TA)

It is the provision of consultants, advisers and similar personnel, as well as training and institutional support, to recipient countries.

Tied Aid

The aid where procurement of the goods or services is limited to the funding country or to a group of countries.

Transition

By the date SY1393 (2014/15) international military forces will hand over the lead on security to the Afghan national security forces. Transition is the Government of Afghanistan's process of taking over leadership of security and development assistance programming from donors and implementers. It was precipitated by the Lisbon accord on military transition.

Chapter 1 **Introduction**

PAR (public administration reform) in Afghanistan is nothing less than rebuilding an effective state after more than two decades of conflict and administrative decay.

Source – World Bank (2008) *Afghanistan: Building an Effective State: Priorities for Public Administration Reform*, World Bank, Kabul

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Research

This thesis is concerned with re-establishing and rebuilding public administration in a country that has experienced armed conflict for more than 25 years, continues to suffer from ongoing conflict and instability and remains at high risk of that conflict continuing. The research looks specifically at a subset of Public Administration Reform (PAR): Civil Service and Administrative Reform (CSAR). Improving public administration is regarded as vital to support Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCASs) in emerging from conflict and instability and transitioning to longer-term development. It is a complex, challenging task, and one that is poorly understood.

The thesis uses the acronym FCAS to mean Fragile and Conflict Affected State, though the affected states have on occasion stated their preferred terminology to be Fragile and Conflict Affected Situation, in some cases preferring not to use ‘fragile’ at all; the latter is a sensitive term, sometimes interpreted as perjorative by the states themselves. The term ‘fragile’ or ‘failing’ is also criticised as being so general that it is an unhelpful description. Nevertheless, the term still has some currency and is useful shorthand for the subject area. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) notes that states:

Are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations (OECD, 2007).

As a consequence, trust and mutual obligations between the state and its citizens have become weak. Measuring how many fragile states there are, though, is not straightforward. The United States ‘Fund for Peace’ lists 33 states as being on ‘alert’ status¹. The World Bank in 2011 produced a ‘harmonised’ list of what it calls ‘Fragile Situations’. There are 31 countries and territories listed. The Bank notes that on their list ‘Fragile Situations’ have either a) a harmonised average CPIA country rating of 3.2 or less, or b) the presence of a UN and/or regional peacekeeping or peacebuilding mission during the past three years. The list

¹ <http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2012-sortable>. (need to put in reference list)

also includes primarily International Development Association (IDA) eligible countries and non-member or inactive territories/countries without CPIA scores². The Bank recognises that their list is ‘interim’ as they continue to work on improving and refining their understanding of fragility³.

In this opening chapter, the genesis of the research question is explored and some early key definitions set out, as well as a short review of why the topic is so important. Following elaboration of the research question itself, the research purpose, aims and objectives are elaborated on. The specific and single case study of Afghanistan is then introduced. The chapter concludes with a short review of the research process: some words concerning the limitations of working on an FCAS in a place like Afghanistan, and a short synopsis of why the approach of using ‘wicked problems’ is employed as a lens through which to examine the research question.

The need for sound public administration in FCASs is counterbalanced by the difficulties faced in rebuilding administration and the lack of evidence and explicit theory on what works and why, what to do first and in what sequence, and how to know whether things are getting better (World Bank, 2012a). This thesis argues that FCASs have a particular set of characteristics that require a different approach to reforming public administration from that followed in the ‘West’ and in stable developing countries. Rebuilding FCASs is, it is argued, a problem of wicked proportions when considered in the round.

Webber and Rittel (1973) introduced the idea of what they called ‘wicked’ problems as opposed to ordinary ‘tame’ problems. These wicked problems arose from extreme degrees of uncertainty, risk, and social complexity. It is posited that rebuilding public administration in an FCAS is a wicked problem on all counts, not least the problem of working in a country in active conflict and profound political complexity; rebuilding state institutions, their capacity and the civil service as a functioning whole is probably the most difficult task of all. This requires a new theoretical perspective on why this is the case and how a new approach might

² The International Development Association (IDA) “is the part of the World Bank that helps the world’s poorest countries. Established in 1960, IDA aims to reduce poverty by providing loans (called ‘credits’) and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people’s living conditions” (IDA 2012, p.1).

³ World Bank website, accessed 14 May 2013:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/EXTLICUS/0,,contentMDK:22230573~pagePK:64171531~menuPK:4448982~piPK:64171507~theSitePK:511778,00.html>. (need to put in reference list)

use this theoretical approach to improve interventions and outcomes. At least some international research has already started to demonstrate that traditional development frameworks, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or Poverty Reduction Strategies, fall short of providing an adequate basis for effective action to address the challenges of FCASs (OECD 2011, p.45).

The concept of wicked problems in public policy seemed particularly relevant 40 years ago when first introduced by Webber and Rittel (1973), and has continued resonance to this day. It is particularly relevant to the challenges posed by FCASs with their multifaceted problems, and many stakeholders, each with differing views of the problem itself and a broad variety of potential solutions. Whilst the concept of wicked problems has been applied to a number of disciplines, it has not been looked at in depth in the concept of an FCAS, even though they appear to meet the criteria that defines a wicked problem. Theories concerned with development and the provision of humanitarian assistance, and emerging analysis of State Building (SB) and stabilisation have not generally utilised a wicked problem framework. The author could have used a number of other approaches, such as complexity theory per se (rejected because it is too general and more routinely applied to strategy and leadership⁴) or perhaps complexity economics (rejected because of its understandable emphasis on complex economics systems and economic development). The reasons for rejection are stated more explicitly in chapter 2.

Afghanistan is a complex emergency that has vexed the International Community (IC) for nearly 40 years, perhaps longer if one considers the role of Afghanistan during the great geopolitical struggles of the 19th century. It demonstrates many elements of an intractable, ‘wicked’ problem such as its resistance to resolution. The international policy discourse also implies that lessons have not been learned from past experience and mistakes, and do not change policies, direction and approach, thus replicating errors⁵.

The Problem and Why it is Important

⁴ See, for example, the forthcoming Boulton, J., P. Allen et al. (2013), *Embracing Complexity*, Oxford University Press.

⁵ See also Easterly (2007) for a critique of lessons ‘not learned’.

Getting the public sector to function is important because if it is well organised and effective it can provide essential services, develop and manage infrastructure, employ substantial numbers of people, develop social, environmental, economic and other policy and generally create the impression of a country that is ‘well governed’. A population that feels it is “well governed is more likely to regard its government as legitimate and might therefore be less inclined towards instability” (World Bank 2012a, pp.1–2). Feeling better governed is therefore posited as linked to stability. A capable public service can also create public *value* and deliver results which can enhance the legitimacy of government. Conversely, a badly governed state is more likely to be extractive and corrupt and to abuse human rights. In the extreme case of Somalia, a United Nations (UN) Monitoring Group Report noted:

Somalia’s political leaders have successfully marketed the government’s weakness, fragility and possible collapse as a lure to attract more assistance. As a result, corruption, embezzlement and fraud are no longer symptoms of mismanagement, but have in fact become a system of management (Bryden et al, 2011).

Consequently in FCASs there has been increasing focus by the IC on developing the capacity or capability of government and its institutions, its ability to govern and the development of wider ‘good governance’. The increasing convergence of Statebuilding (SB) and Peacebuilding (PB) in international interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Somalia seeks to address a common purpose, the “building of an effective resilient state and reducing the risk of the state falling back into conflict” (Gravingholt, Ganzle and Ziaja 2009). Unfortunately there is an inherent dilemma in the pressing short-term need to develop government capacity and gain legitimacy to enhance stability, and the inevitable requirement for a long-term focus on institution-building (UK Stabilisation Unit, 2014). Thus, with little guidance on understanding public sector reform in FCASs, Development Partners (DPs) continue to struggle with ill-thought-out and poorly defined interventions, leading to a waste of resources and effort.

Call (2008, p.1491) believes that recent interest in state failure has to be examined in the context of the post-9/11 period. Much recent enthusiasm for rediscovering the ‘state’ and its institutions has thus followed the US ‘war on terror’ with so-called failing states deemed dangerous for Western security interests. Thus the need for efficient and effective government in FCASs is now linked to international security issues. The notion that security is not just about war and military systems but is complex and embraces good governance has increasing traction in studies of international relations theory. Buzan (1997, p.8) notes:

Military security concerns the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states and state's perceptions of each other's intentions. Political security concerns the organisational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy.

Ball (2010) traces the evolution of the security sector reform debate over the last ten years, demonstrating its origins in the UK's concerns for poverty, security and justice but noting that the growing emphasis on good governance in Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes to date is also problematic and poorly understood. The recent focus on new governments emerging out of the 'Arab Spring', and especially the fallout from Egypt and the current Syrian dilemma, has again focused international attention on the importance of good government and political security. The economic, political, and environmental aspects of regional and national security and changes in the types of conflict experienced have changed the way we view good government in conflict-affected situations and, more importantly, how we address government whilst conflict is ongoing and in the immediate aftermath.

More pressing perhaps is the fact that FCASs are bunched up at the low end of the Human Development Index (UNDP 2011). Collier (2007, pp.5-8) points to the impact of the 'conflict trap' on poverty. He notes that three quarters of the poorest billion people in the world have gone through or are in the midst of conflicts.

Interventions in FCASs are costly. With the increased focus on addressing state failures, aid flows to FCASs have witnessed a long and steady increase since 1990 (OECD 2013). The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is scaling up its work in FCASs with 21 out of 28 (75%) of its focus countries now being classified as fragile or conflict-affected (The Future of UK Aid, 2011). The stakes are particularly high in Afghanistan. The US alone has allocated over \$72 billion to secure, stabilise, and rebuild Afghanistan since 2002, and President Obama requested over \$18 billion alone for the fiscal year 2012 (US Govt GAO 2011, p.1). The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) estimates that a total of US\$90 billion has been pledged in external assistance (2002–2013), of which US\$69 billion has been committed (2002–2011) and US\$57 billion disbursed in the period 2002–2010 (GIROA AMD 2012, p.1).

In tandem with the growing international aid investment and interest in FCASs, recent studies and 'international dialogues' (Conflict, Security, and Development Group, KCL 2003, pp.8–

14; Chr. Michelsen Institute et al. 2005, p.165; OECD 2010a, p.5) have provided a long list of weaknesses in managing post-conflict statebuilding, including a lack of planning and prioritising of key administrative reforms; poor sequencing of reforms and institution-building; poor strategic planning processes; poor service delivery; limited ownership or ‘buy-in’ from the host country; a failure to make real progress on capacity development a reality; and poor coordination amongst donors. Many of the problems experienced relate back, in one way or another, to the challenge of re-establishing public administration and building the legitimacy of the government, and the capacity of civil servants to deliver on their mandates and work with external interventions.

FCASs have been linked to weak or ineffective political, economic, and societal institutions by a number of authors (Fukuyama 2004, 2005; Paris 2004; Rotberg 2004). Acemoglu and Robinson (2013), examining why states fail, cite the failure of “institutions, institutions, institutions”. The importance of the link between security, peace, statebuilding and effective government and institutions has been stated by Lockhart, Ghani and Carnahan (2005, and 2008), Call (2008) and the OECD (2011). ‘Statebuilding’ has now taken centre stage in international development circles. Inevitably some authors have begun to question, in a general way, whether donors *can* restore governance in post-conflict states, bearing in mind the complex set of conditions required to build indigenous governance (Rondinelli and Montgomery 2005, p.15). This position has, in part, given rise to the ‘good enough governance’ paradigm, popularised by Grindle (2004, 2007) and preceded by North’s (1990) work on the importance of the quality of the state’s institutions. A ‘good enough’ approach accepts that the IC cannot do everything, everywhere at the same time. Prioritisation may seem common sense and a *sine qua non* in any intervention in an FCAS but, in practice, and as will be demonstrated in this research, it is not easy to do. The problem is that a state needs ‘government’ and administration both during and after conflict but it is not at all clear what sort of government or administration is appropriate, ‘good enough’ and sufficient for the specific situation at hand, nor is it clear how to achieve it and in what sequence. ‘Good enough’, as an objective, has been discussed at length by Grindle for the last ten years or more. Many international organisations and governments now see ‘good enough’ as a useful approach for developing nations to address their development problems, but ‘good enough’ still remains an elusive concept. With such a startling lack of evidence it may seem surprising that foreign countries have such an appetite for intervention and the challenge of building

institutions. They seem eternally optimistic that they can deal with the complexity of the challenges.

Thus the starting point in this thesis is that rebuilding public administration in FCASs, within the context of wider security stabilisation, PB and SB exercises, is a challenge of epic proportions.

1.2 The Research Problem

It is posited that engaging with public administration in FCASs is recognised as very difficult, that lessons from past experience are frequently not correctly identified, learnt or poorly applied, and that making a public administration rebuilding or reform plan achievable, realistic and capable of realisation is challenging. This thesis looks at the effects of current approaches, models or processes of CSAR, promoted and implemented by the IC in Afghanistan, in attempting to build central and local government institutions over the period 2002–12. The thesis also examines the contribution of CSAR to the key stabilisation and statebuilding efforts of the host government and external partners. This leads to the central research question:

which approach or approaches to civil service and administrative reforms are most unlikely to succeed in a Fragile and Conflict Affected Situation?

1.3 The Purpose of the Research

More specifically, this thesis has the following objectives:

Objective 1

- To review existing literature on theories, concepts and understanding of public administration. Identify the current body of knowledge concerning the development and reform of public administration in both benign development contexts and conflict-affected settings, including relevant institutional and management change theory.
- Review selectively current literature on the logic and underpinnings of current state formation and statebuilding theory, and the literature on FCASs.

- Review literature on stabilisation, its growing relevance and application to current interventions in conflicts, and what it says about priorities for public administration. Review selectively the related literature on conflict and peacebuilding.
- Review the literature on the concept of wicked problems and their potential/use for understanding the challenges in FCASs.
- Identify whether there are gaps in the academic literature, particularly with regard to understanding the approach to civil service and administrative reforms in FCASs and the relationship to statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives.

Objective 2

Based on what is known and an understanding of the gaps in the literature, evaluate the extent to which existing theories informing PAR, institution-building and statebuilding can be applied to FCASs.

Objective 3

Utilising the Afghanistan case study, evaluate the extent to which the general findings that emerge from objective 2 above are coherent with the experience of the current and ongoing interventions by the IC in Afghanistan's CSAR programme. In particular:

- Identify how CSAR interventions were affected by the challenges associated with an FCAS and consider the degree of 'complexity' of the problems faced.
- Analyse issues and events that led to the plans for and initial design of CSAR and subsequent attempts to measure progress.
- Identify how CSAR has been affected by the challenges associated with the prevailing instability and fragility, and other key context issues.
- Examine the relationship between the design and implementation of CSAR and the overarching stabilisation objectives; and ascertain whether the design and implementation of CSAR hinders rather than assists progress towards wider statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives, in this case achieving the goals of the Transition Strategy planned for 2014.
- Assess the impact of CSAR over the last ten years.

- Assess the interdependent relationships between activities that support CSAR and wider PAR reforms and the documented successes and failures.

Objective 4

Based on an analysis of the research findings:

- Assess whether the multiple parties involved have either convergent or conflicting values and/or interests, and a mutual understanding of the problem and potential solutions.
- By referring back to the literature review and current practice, suggest a revised approach to PSM in Afghanistan that may be able to address the levels of complexity and the wicked problems faced in FCASs.
- Whilst recognising the possible key limitations of the Afghanistan case study, guide policymakers or practitioners in this field towards more effective CSAR interventions in FCASs.

The specific case of Afghanistan

Since the return of the IC to Afghanistan in 2001, there has generally been a concerted effort to improve the civil service and administration as part of an overall statebuilding effort. More than ten years later, CSAR, as part of a wider programme of PAR, is still purported to be central to the external intervention strategies of foreign governments in the period 2011–14 and vital to support the proposed transition of responsibility for security to Afghan authorities as set out in the document ‘Joint Framework for Inteqal: A Process for Strengthening Peace and Stability in Afghanistan and the Region’. This fundamentally important document is used by the IC, the Afghan Government and NATO-ISAF as a road map⁶. The Strategic Partnership Agreements signed between the Afghan Government and a number of Western governments all refer to this document. The official Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) on an Enduring Partnership was signed at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, Portugal in 2010 (NATO, 2010). The Declaration focuses on the three separate interlinked domains of governance, development and security. At a political level, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) noted:

⁶ Interestingly, this document has no date or any other ‘reference marks’ visible.

Transition is primarily about strengthening and transferring security responsibility to the Afghans. However, a resilient ANSF⁷ is only part of the solution. Development of a viable Afghan state and a durable political settlement are also vital (FCO 2012)⁸.

The London Conference Communiqué in January 2010 introduced the pledge to develop a plan for phased transition to an Afghan security lead. By 2011 the Transition Strategy (Inteqal) was articulated and agreed in detail by the Government and the IC (GoIRA and NATO-ISAF 2011). At the Tokyo Conference in July 2012, the participants agreed a programme of support for the transition period of 2011–14 and then further technical and financial support to a decade of ‘Transformation’. The Tokyo Declaration (2012, p.10) reiterates the mutual commitment to “strengthened governance and institutions”, and two years of continuous international commitments to a transition process.

The term ‘transition’ is used mainly by the IC to describe a transfer of responsibility for maintaining security from NATO-ISAF forces to Afghan military and police units following the planned withdrawal of foreign troops. By 2011 the process was already underway in seven provinces and is planned to be completed across the country by 2014. The Transition Strategy (Joint Framework for Inteqal 2011) has two other key dimensions of transition: governance and development. These depend on a shift of centralised administrative activities from the centre to sub-national levels, in effect a de-concentration of government authority, decision-making and operations from the centre to lower tiers of government and increasing capacity at the sub-national levels: province and district. With regard to administration:

Through Public Administration Reform, GIRoA will also grow its capacity at the national and sub-national level while enhancing organisational efficiency by allowing for transparent, fair and merit-based recruitment and appraisal systems within the Afghan civil service (p.2).

The clear implication is that if these administrative dimensions are not addressed the state will not be sufficiently capable of governing when foreign forces are withdrawn; a state that is not ‘viable’ might therefore be more likely to slip back into conflict. The strategy implies that without improvements to governance and public administration, there would be further damage to the already shaky legitimacy of the Government which, in turn, could conceivably encourage a continuation or resurgence of the insurgency. The ‘transition’ therefore relies on support for the Government’s key National Priority Programmes that address PAR and

⁷ Afghan National Security Force (ANSF).

⁸ Accessed 9 May 2012 at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/afghanistan/afghanistan-transition/transition-facts>.

specifically CSAR, building up local government and promoting ‘good governance’, as these underpin a series of key stabilisation objectives. ISAF’s mission is, however, only to ‘facilitate’⁹ improvements in governance; how it does this will be subject to some discussion.

NATO-ISAF has also stated that the IC collectively needs to change the way in which it supports both formal and informal governance institutions, and change some of the focus of what it does, and where it does it, with the intention of catalysing sufficient improvements in government and good governance to support the transition process between 2011 and the end of 2014. This is believed necessary to ensure the state is effective enough to sustain an irreversible transition of security, and sufficiently robust to withstand future security shocks¹⁰. ‘Transition’ is sometimes characterised as an ‘end state’ in stability operations. In referring to US military doctrine, Armstrong and Chura Beaver (2010, p.10) note:

Transition as an end state indicates that certain ground conditions are measurably different than preceding conditions and usually conform with more acceptable standards of governance, economic stability, and security.

‘More acceptable’ is unfortunately not easy to define. The official position of NATO-ISAF is therefore that CSAR, linked to other aspects of ‘good governance’, is critical to achievement of the immediate stabilisation agenda and the ultimate transition goal.

1.4 The Research Process

The research process is simply the means of effectively locating the information needed to carry out this research. The Afghan context suggests that the various elements will have to be gathered from a wide variety of sources. In a traditional research design a researcher will undertake a literature review that leads to a hypothesis. The hypothesis is then tested. One problem with this is that only data relevant to the theory is usually examined. In a complex setting such as an FCAS it is likely that other useful data may be ignored. Thus in this case the researcher starts with some initial theoretical propositions. The main thrust of the research is trying to understand ‘what is going on?’ and ‘what are the main problems in trying to attain the required outcomes and what or how are we doing to solve the problems?’ The researcher is thus ultimately responsible for gaining an understanding of the nature and rationale of what

⁹ Definition of ‘facilitate’ is make easy or easier; www.oed.com

¹⁰ Based on conversations with senior NATO-ISAF personnel.

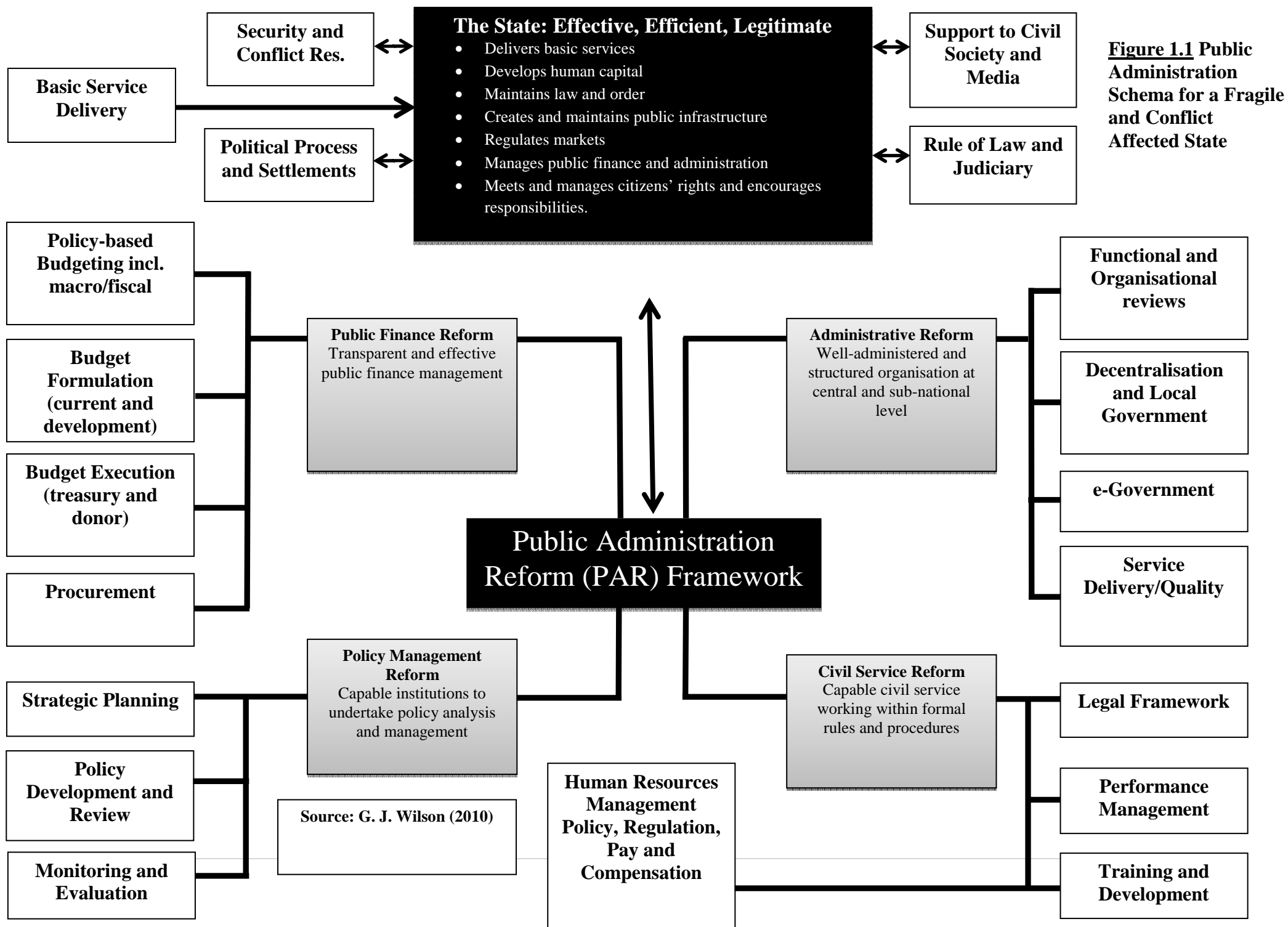
s/he sees and what s/he hears – the processes and the interactions in terms of what is happening on the ground.

The thesis uses a single case study research design in a high-profile intervention by the IC in Afghanistan. However, reference is made to other recent conflicts, statebuilding, stabilisation and reconstruction projects where they offer relevant insights. The research methodology and examination of the possible alternatives is set out in greater detail in chapter 3.

1.5 Research Scope and Limitations

The complicated and extensive nature of PAR is shown at Figure 1.1; in this figure PAR is located within to the wider statebuilding tasks in a FCAS. Public administration has a number of definitions and many terms in public administration are used interchangeably. Confusion over the use of even basic terms has driven the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) Committee on Public Administration to attempt to draw up an extended definition of terms (UN, 2008). They draw on a number of academic and practitioner sources to prepare a useful overview: ‘Compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration’. Their definition of public administration draws on that previously drafted by UNDP (2003), which suggests that public administration has two closely related meanings:

- (a) The aggregate machinery (policies, rules, procedures, systems, organisational structures, personnel and so forth) funded by the State budget and in charge of the management and direction of the affairs of the executive government, and its interaction with other stakeholders in the State, society and external environment;*
- (b) The management and implementation of the whole set of government activities dealing with the implementation of laws, regulations and decisions of the Government and the management related to the provision of public services.*



UNESCO also state that public administration is concerned with the organisation of government policies, programmes, processes and organisations, the conduct and behaviour of officials (non-elected) formally responsible for the provision of government regulatory, executive, judiciary and service mandates and functions (UN, 2008).

A further distinction has to be made between the terms *public service* and *public sector*. The *public service* is taken to mean ‘those employed within the government system’. The *public sector*, sometimes called the ‘state sector’, is defined as that part of the state apparatus which is responsible for the production, delivery and allocation of resources by and for the government (Lane, 1995). ‘*Public sector*’ is also understood to be that part of the economy that is concerned with providing basic government services. It follows that *public sector reform* entails making or encouraging deliberate changes to the organisation, structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them to run better, as well as developing the capacity of the civil servants delivering that reform. Public Sector Reform (PSR), sometimes referred to as public sector management (PSM), has now spread across the globe, albeit in a wide variety of forms and focuses (O’Flynn 2007; Pollit and Bouckaert 2010). In the context of this thesis *administrative reform* is therefore described as “specifically promoted change to the machinery of government including organisations, processes and structures”. In practical term this accords with the World Bank’s agreed definition of *public sector management reform*: “public sector management (PSM) reform is concerned with improving public sector results by changing the way governments work” (World Bank, 2012a).

A *civil servant* in the UK context is a person employed by the crown, excluding those employed in Parliament and other public bodies¹¹. Similarly, in the European Union, most countries adopt a strictly legal definition of the term civil servant. As part of the discussions surrounding adoption of the ‘*Acquis Communautaire*’¹² by candidate countries to the European Union, the OECD has drawn attention to the role of civil servant as someone employed by

¹¹ <http://www.civilservant.org.uk/definitions.shtml> accessed 12/7/2012.

¹² ‘*Acquis communautaire*’ is a French term referring to “the cumulative body of European Community laws, comprising the EC’s objectives, substantive rules, policies and, in particular, the primary and secondary legislation and case law – all of which form part of the legal order of the European Union (EU). Accessed at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/acquiscommunautaire.htm>.

the state and holding state powers (OECD SIGMA 1999, p.20). In Afghanistan a civil servant is defined as:

A person appointed by the Government to perform its executive and administrative duties based on the provisions in law. The ranks and grades of civil servants will be regulated according to the relevant legal document. Any person who is not included in the ranks and grades described in Clause 1 of this Article is not considered to be a civil servant (Civil Service Law of Afghanistan, 2008b, Art.4).

This definition is important and will be referred to later in more detail. Civil service reform implies developing the capacity of the civil service and civil servants to fulfil their mandate. It is therefore defined to include issues of recruitment, selection, appointment and promotion, pay, number of employees/establishment, performance appraisal and related matters. Issues that are of concern and the responsibility of the civil service are generally set out in state civil service laws. Bringing together the above definitions, it is possible to describe the overall PAR framework being constituted by four main elements as set out in Figure 1.1 above. These four elements are:

1. Civil Service Reform
2. Administrative Reform
3. Public Finance Management (PFM), and
4. Policy Coordination.

PAR, as it applies to each layer of government is therefore a wide subject. Fig 1.1 serves to demonstrate the potentially wide array of components in an integrated PAR programme, and the degree of complexity. The intention of the thesis is not to examine each area of PAR. That would simply not be possible in the time available; rather, the intention is to examine CSAR, strategy and overall approach, emphasising the links and relationships to parallel sets of PAR activities. Thus there will necessarily be limitations with regard to the emphasis that can be placed on other PAR sub-components and systems.

It would also be too complicated to address PAR at all *levels* of government and administration. Thus a study which stretches across many different layers of government and different agencies would not adequately acknowledge the distinct roles, responsibilities and nature of business of each. An initial review of the literature, coupled with recent practitioner

experience, indicates that the primary attention in an immediate post-conflict phase is almost always on the centre of government and on rebuilding the capacity of the civil service.

Donors' attention also remains initially heavily weighted in favour of a central government approach. The perception is that the centre is responsible for the running of executive government, control of the budget, drafting of appropriate legislation and ensuring that a framework for delivery of basic services is in place (OECD, 2009a). Efficiency and effectiveness of civil servants, in the form of a well-run Prime Minister's Office (or, in Afghanistan's case, the President's Office), Cabinet Secretariat (Council of Ministers Secretariat) and the key ministries of Finance, Public Service (or equivalent civil service commission), Local Government, Defence and Interior, especially, are generally critical to the success of statebuilding initiatives. The initial focus on public administration, therefore, naturally tends to focus attention in three main areas:

- The role of the centre of government and the design of the machinery of government.
- Public financial management.
- The role of civil servants and the agency (or those agencies) which have responsibility for PAR and civil service management.

Where stabilisation is pursued in cases of conflict there tends to be a specific focus on the security agencies. An early observation is that this bias towards the centre may be problematic. Whilst building and promoting the legitimacy of the government takes place at all levels of government, delivery of basic services is mainly at the lower levels. However, as will be shown, usually much less attention is paid to sub-national government even though key stabilisation objectives are impossible to achieve without building the capacity of local authorities (local government) to coordinate and deliver administration, security, and development. The research design will address this issue.

Some Limitations and Issues with Regard to Research Projects in Afghanistan

The key limitations on this research ultimately revolve around what was possible in terms of:

- Access to key decision-makers, including senior officials in both the host country and the IC. This can be problematic for many researchers but in this case the research

benefited from excellent access to officials, though mainly in the centre of government, as access to local officials is restricted due to security concerns.

- Financial feasibility. This is a PhD research project and there are necessary limitations imposed by the costs of carrying out research in dangerous and insecure environments. There was no allowance for personal protection services and limited funds to support in-country fieldwork; therefore, interviews were confined to the capital city Kabul. Nevertheless, due to the ‘privileged’ access afforded to the researcher, this is not regarded as too serious an issue.
- Security considerations. Because Afghanistan remains insecure, access to places and people is and remains restricted. All research in Afghanistan is bound by the extreme level of insecurity.
- Language. Afghanistan is non-English speaking. Many potential key interlocutors do not speak English; indeed, Afghanistan is a country of many languages. All interviewees spoke good English.
- Potential Bias. The potential for personal bias in the interpretation of events and interviews. It is generally held that all perspectives are informed by the constitutive histories, that all representations are (un)consciously strategic. Appropriate measures have been implemented in the research methodology to guard against this.
- Lack of Research. Working in an FCAS frequently means that there is a real lack of academic research, thus increasing the need to draw on so-called ‘grey literature’; this issue is addressed further in the literature review.
- Field conditions. Working in the midst of a conflict means that there are severe limitations on the ability of actors in Afghanistan to monitor and assess the impact of their programmes, which both hampers data collection and hampers ongoing adaptation and reform initiative. Military, PRT data and many internal ‘security-classified’ reports undoubtedly exist but are often not readily available.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents the review of literature utilising some elements of a ‘systematic review’ (SR) approach (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009; DFID, 2011). The literature review covers both

academic sources and a necessary review of the current international policy discourse concerning FCASs. The chapter concludes with identifying gaps in the literature concerning the reasons why civil service and administrative reforms so often fail in an FCAS. The literature review concludes with a look at the literature around wicked problems and complexity. This in turn leads the researcher to develop a methodology that seeks to understand Afghan ‘reality’.

Chapter 3 describes the approach to the research and the chosen research methods to address the research questions outlined in chapter 1. The chapter is organised into three main sections. Section 3.2 describes the research philosophy. Section 3.3 describes the approach to the research and section 3.4 outlines in some detail the research design, including phasing for implementing the research in the field, noting particularly the unusual field conditions posed by Afghanistan.

Chapter 4 examines the approaches to public administration policy and related technical assistance policy in Afghanistan documentation, and the experience with attempts at stabilisation in Afghanistan. This includes analysis of primary source documents from both the GIRoA, donors, consultants, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the military (ISAF-NATO) including but not limited to strategy, policy reform approaches, prioritisation, project documentation, research papers and project evaluations. The research also reviews mechanisms and approaches in providing technical assistance to the GIRoA.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of selected documents, reports and evaluations to clarify the approaches adopted and lessons identified across the last ten years of support to Afghanistan, spanning the period from early negotiations surrounding the Bonn Agreement and its commitments to the London, Kabul, Bonn 2 and Tokyo conferences. The review also looks ahead to the 2014 transition and longer-term development, the so-called ‘transformation decade’.

This is then followed in chapter 6 by the analysis of the initial focus group discussions data and the interviews collected in the fieldwork phases. Chapter 7 presents conclusions concerning the research question and the implications for public administration theory, policy and practice in FCAS. The chapter concludes with recommendations on further research.

1.7 Summary

In this introduction, the background and focus of the research has been introduced. In addition, the research question has been posed. It has been posited that re-establishing, or in some cases reforming, basic public administration systems is a vital part of an initial PB and SB strategy and, in Afghanistan, is a vital component of a stabilisation strategy, where interventions and stability operations seek to simultaneously build state capability and strengthen government institutions and legitimacy.

The current narrative suggests that stabilisation and PB without the concomitant development of host state capacity to maintain security, keep the peace, impose the rule of law and provide basic services and administration is likely to ultimately be a fruitless and frustrating exercise, although timely action and thoughtful, carefully sequenced responses can increase chances of success. For these reasons, this thesis in part seeks a greater understanding of the objectives, priorities, fundamental principles, ideas, approaches and working methods that have been used in Afghanistan to try to rebuild the public sector and specifically the civil service and the administration in the immediate aftermath of conflict. The thesis uses the lens of wicked problems as a tool to explore, identify missing links and explain further. However, as noted by Weiss:

Rarely does research supply an ‘answer’ that policy actors employ to solve a policy problem. Rather, research provides a background of data, empirical generalisations, and ideas that affect the way that policy makers think about a problem ...but to acknowledge this is not the same as saying that research findings have little influence on policy (Weiss 1982).

The next chapter seeks to critically review the associated literature.

Chapter 2 **Literature Review**

2.1 **Introduction**

There are two main *purposes* for a literature review (Hart, 2003; Phillips and Pugh, 2010):

1. To demonstrate the ability of the researcher to identify and understand the most relevant and important literature in the research area. The review thus encompasses a survey of peer-reviewed articles, books, conference papers and related theses.
2. The literature review also identifies ‘gaps’ in the research that this study will address, and thus produces a reason (or justification) for the subsequent research.

The overall *objective* of this literature review is to discover what is known and what is believed with regard to the subject matter at hand. The review will also demonstrate the interrelated complexities of public administration reform and a multinational stabilisation and statebuilding operation. By examining each area individually a picture emerges of a complex web of interrelated activities, with multiple actors and stakeholders working on a project where there are different interpretations of the problem, the challenges faced and the range of feasible solutions.

The initial focus of this literature review is to examine the literature on the current body of knowledge concerning the development and reform of public administration, looking firstly at theory and its application in benign development contexts. The section begins by examining some of the key definitions not covered in the introduction. The next section reviews the ‘traditional’ model of public administration and its evolution into New Public Management (NPM) or the ‘managerialist’ approach and its seeming recent reunion with understanding and redefining ‘public sector values’. The literature review then analyses the FCAS experience with PAR using a multiple-lens model of new institutionalism, change management theory and principal–agent theory. The intention is to highlight the successes, limitations and assumptions and the known causes of failure, as well as gaps with regard to PAR efforts, through reference to the theories that underpin the initial propositions set out at the end of Chapter 1.

Section 2.3 looks at the growth of interest in FCAS and the attempts to understand the characteristics of failure and/or collapse, causes and consequences, and their strong links to conflict. In Section 2.4, recent theory and practice in concepts of the state and statebuilding is examined including, *inter alia*, state formation and statebuilding theory, models of what constitutes a ‘functioning’ state and issues concerning state sovereignty.

In Section 2.5, the review examines the evolving international policy discourse on addressing problems of fragility and conflict: the instruments, approaches and frameworks for intervention and their links to CSAR. Statebuilding, stabilisation and peacebuilding approaches have emerged over the last seven years or so as policy instruments for the IC to tackle the national and international security threats and development challenges posed by FCASs. This section also looks at the experiences of some recent statebuilding interventions.

In Section 2.6, the literature on wicked problems is explored, partly as a way to understand the complexities that emerge from the reviews above but also to draw attention to the reality that extreme complexity exists in FCASs, sometimes also accentuated by chaos. It is suggested that the wicked problem literature can help generate insight and even provide some tools or techniques that can help decision-makers assimilate and understand these complex situations. Linking an understanding of wicked problems to the inherent difficulty in making decisions experienced in a complex, often chaotic environment such as the international intervention in Afghanistan leads us inexorably to a much more experimental approach. The thesis will demonstrate that this is the antithesis of what has emerged in practice.

Examining each theme in turn poses some difficulty in that there are inevitably overlap and synergies between the various themes. However, Section 2.7 will draw attention to common threads, along with noting the inconsistencies, dilemmas, and inaccurate assumptions as well as the gaps in the literature. The chapter concludes that there is little conceptual or theoretical work focusing specifically on implementation of civil service and administrative reform in FCASs and that the concept of wicked problems is extremely useful for encapsulating the myriad of issues that militate against making substantive progress on civil service and administrative reform in an FCAS.

As preparation for the analytic approach set out in Chapter 3, Chapter 2 concludes with the design of a draft conceptual framework for PAR in an FCAS.

Sources and Approach to the Review

This thesis has adopted a form of review described as a ‘systematic review’ (SR). SR is described as a rigorous and transparent form of literature review which has its roots in medical research and the natural sciences. The approach is set out in some detail in Denyer and Tranfield (2009). A less academic practitioner-oriented description is offered by DFID (2011). This thesis takes an approach that accords with the core principles of the SR methodology: rigour, transparency and reliability. This reflects the fact that SRs do not constitute a homogenous approach: there are different ‘levels’ of SR and a full SR is regarded as extremely expensive and time-consuming. As this is a PhD, the search protocol has been modified to reflect the time available.

The SR approach, as described by Denyer and Tranfield, helps the researcher design a research approach that gathers the best available academic evidence with that information available to the practitioner, presented in such a way as to allow better decision-making and clear action. In line with general systematic review methodology, the search protocol adopted the key concepts that are mirrored in the research question set out in Chapter 1: *civil service and administrative reforms, wicked problems, Fragile and Conflict Affected States/Situations and good government and good governance*. Detailed search terms were identified within these key areas after discussions with Cranfield library staff and other knowledgeable PAR practitioners. The practitioners also provided additional ‘hard to locate’ documents and invaluable background information concerning the case study of Afghanistan and other interventions in FCAS.

This review is more wide-ranging than would perhaps normally be the case and goes beyond a review of scholarly articles and books. Academic evidence is regarded as only one input into decision-making processes in management and organisation studies (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009, p.687). Additionally a great deal of recent writing on FCASs is in the domain of governments, including national strategies for engagement with FCASs, military doctrine, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), international development organisations such as the UN and the World Bank (WB), International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and expert practitioners. The literature review, therefore, includes analysis of so-called grey literature, as some primary sources for work in fragile states are inherently ‘grey’.

Grey literature is defined as information produced at all levels of government, academia, business and industry in electronic and print forms not controlled by commercial publishing, i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body. This includes, therefore, reports, papers, technical notes, monographs, memoranda, conference papers etc. from the public and private sectors, NGOs, and international agencies (The 4th International Conference on Grey Literature, GL 1999). Another definition by Alberani (1990, p.358) notes:

In general, grey literature publications are non-conventional, fugitive, and sometimes ephemeral publications. They may include, but are not limited to the following types of materials: reports (pre-prints, preliminary progress and advanced reports, technical reports, statistical reports, memoranda, state-of-the art reports, market research reports, etc.), theses, conference proceedings, technical specifications and standards, non-commercial translations, bibliographies, technical and commercial documentation, and official documents not published commercially (primarily government reports and documents).

The British Library considers grey literature a vital resource and some authors have suggested that the rapid increases in access to grey literature is changing the face of academic research (Asserson, 2005; Banks, 2005). They suggest, *inter alia*, that policy research approaches, the grey literature and their findings can help with theory-building. Indeed, some researchers predict the eventual collapse of the distinction between grey and non-grey literature (Banks, 2006, p.4). The interest in grey literature even spawned an *International Journal of Grey Literature*, though it was only published for one year in 2000¹³.

Whilst ‘grey’ literature is often downgraded because it is regarded as not independent and not peer-reviewed, in this research it is regarded as indispensable. The problem being researched is a practical one where, as indicated in Chapter 1, there is little explicit theory available. A great deal of policy work, evaluation and monitoring is also extensively independently peer-reviewed. There are also many specially commissioned studies, unpublished research projects and instances of high-quality evaluation work that are independently peer reviewed. Based on the experience of the researcher, the test to assess the validity and usefulness of grey literature comprises: the reputation of the research organisation as measured by peers; that the author/publisher regularly undertakes peer reviews of their work; and that the research is regularly cited in other studies and in peer-reviewed journals. The ‘grey literature’ cited

¹³ Emerald Publishing ISSN: 1466-6189.

below satisfies this criteria. The principal elements of the search strategy are summarised below at table 2.1.

Electronic Searches of Bibliographic Databases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) – covering 650 social science journals • International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) • Social Sciences Abstracts • Dissertations and Theses – Index to Theses • ABI/Inform Global
<p>Notes: A meta-evaluation of articles and data from the academic and professional literature was conducted (English language only). The search focused on electronic searches of bibliographic databases and hand searches of specific journals.</p>
Websites of International Organisations and Academic and NGO General Databases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government statements of strategy and approach (DFID, US State Department) • International dialogues on peacebuilding and statebuilding, the Fragile States Surveys and other related research sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) • International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), United Nations System, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank • Reports by reputable think tanks and research and consulting organisations such as Overseas Development Institute (ODI), RUSI, Clingendael Institute, Centre for Global Development (CGD), IDS, DFID’s Research4Development site, the German Institute for Development, LSE Crisis States Research Project and many others. • Google and Google Scholar • UN Index • UK Parliament • Military doctrine

Table 2.1 Literature Search Strategy

2.2 The Public Administration Reform (PAR) and Civil Service and Administrative Reform (CSAR) Literature

The Traditional Model of Public Administration (TMPA)

What might sometimes be described as ‘classical’ public administration has a long history in tandem with the notion of government itself. The recent theory and practice of traditional public administration began in the late 19th century and it is claimed it lasted up to the last quarter of the 20th century, making it the longest-standing and most successful theory of management in the public sector (Hughes 2003, p.13). In the UK, the landmark Northcote Trevelyan Report (1854) was the first review of public administration in Western countries that advocated the establishment of a permanent, unified and politically neutral civil service, in which appointments were made on merit. This was novel for a time when patronage was the accepted system almost everywhere in the world. It is argued that the Report marked the start of progress towards the formation of a relatively stable UK civil service that was credited with removing much corruption, improving public services and contributing to the management of political change through the particularly turbulent next 100 years (Butler 1993, p.359).

The traditional model of public administration was slowly conceptualised through the ideas of Wilson (1887), Weber (1947) and Taylor (1911). These were the new ‘scientists’ of public administration who built up a theory of public sector organisation and structure that was complemented by modern management techniques. In the US these ideas were advanced by authors such as Waldo (1948) and Gulick and Urwick (1937); they had documented the dramatic increase in the engagement of the US Government in public administration following the introduction of the post-Depression New Deal and the need to account for sharply increased amounts of public expenditure. During the interwar years and the post 1930s, governments in the West evolved based on some key principles: orderly government, standardisation, predictable decision-making, a more active state and a strong belief that objective knowledge and stable government could advance the social and physical well-being of citizens.

In the traditional Weberian model, rational legal authority is attained through the most efficient form of organisation – that is, ‘bureaucracy’. Weber (1919) argued that managers should not rule through arbitrary personal whim but by a formal system of rules. Traditional public administration, therefore, focused on its predictable bureaucratic role. Hood (2000, p.7) describes ‘old public management’ as being somewhat stereotyped as a rigid rule-bound hierarchy focused on process not results and insulated from modern management practices

and business values. However, Hood (2000) is also quick to point out that ‘old public management’ took many divergent forms, as can be seen by comparing the US with the UK, France and Germany. As an example of this, an EU-wide survey of public administration reform in 27 different European administrations demonstrated that administrations organised their HR services a variety of ways. Different national traditions had a considerable impact on the chosen modernisation path (Hammerschmid et al., 2007).

Whilst there may be different lineages, systems, structures and organisations discernible in the different models, the similarity of outcomes in systems of public administration in Europe in particular has driven current notions of a modern, constitutional civil service in a democracy. The OECD Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern Countries Programme (SIGMA 27, 1999, pp.1–13) suggests the following list of conditions is now commonplace in our understanding of traditional public administration:

- Separation between a public sphere and a private sphere;
- Separation between politics and administration;
- Development of individual accountability of civil servants by overcoming former collegial decision-making processes. This calls for well-educated and skilful public managers;
- Sufficient job protection, stability and level of pay, and clearly defined rights and duties of civil servants; and
- Recruitment and promotion based on merit.

All of these conditions contribute, to a great extent, to defining the nature and values of a modern European professional civil service, institutionally homogenous, with the key to all the systems being the development and maintenance of meritocracy. Merit-based recruitment in France was not fully codified until 1946 (Trouve, 1951). The United States, meanwhile, has managed to extend its ‘political spoils’ system up to the present day, albeit somewhat truncated. The US to this day stands astride the fence with a formal system of merit-based appointments sitting alongside a political spoils system that sees appointees penetrating deep into the administration. Despite the residual nature of the spoils system in the USA, Riggs (1963) still notes:

It has become axiomatic in modern public administration that bureaucrats ought to be selected on the basis of universalistic achievement criteria, best expressed in an examination system ... indeed, so deeply ingrained are these ideas that even to question their utility is to risk castigation as a heretic and subversive.

The New Public Management or ‘Managerialist’ Approach

The new institutional economics of the 1960s, discussed later in this review, paved the way for the emergence in the early 1990s of the ‘managerialist’ approach, sometimes called New Public Management (NPM). Hood (1991, 1995), Pollit (1993), Dunleavy and Hood (1994) provide a wide-ranging review. Managerialism is sometimes described in simple terms as a situation where the public sector begins to adopt private sector practices (Box 1999). NPM was generated in part by citizen dissatisfaction with government performance, recurring fiscal problems and seemingly successful restructuring in the private arena. The latter suggested that if the public sector could only harness some of the best practices of the private sector then marked improvements in service delivery could be expected. Advocates of NPM saw civil servants and other public administrators as entrepreneurs and innovators, seeking opportunities to deliver services in new ways, harnessing the power of the market economy, creating and utilising public–private partnerships and private finance (Hood 1995). In the 1980s, influential economists, Nobel Laureates, Milton Friedman and F A Hayek, advocated the superiority of market mechanisms, suggesting that their power could be harnessed and transferred to the public sector. Moreover, Friedman, in his landmark publication *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), advocated strongly for cutting ‘back the Leviathan’ and reining in the explosion of public expenditure as being caused by Keynesian economics and the expansion of the welfare state. His ideas preceded the growth of NPM but paved the way for its introduction.

In a sign of these times, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, brought business leaders, including supermarket tsars, into the UK Government during the 1980s to advise on public sector reform, a trend continued to the current day.¹⁴ This trend is observed even in countries like Afghanistan where President George Bush initially employed advisers recruited from the private sector rather than seasoned administrators to help rebuild Afghanistan post-9/11.

¹⁴ Sir Philip Green, the owner of international clothing company Topshop, was brought in by the 2010 UK Coalition Government to advise on procurement savings possible for the Government if it adopted standard business practices.

Osborne and Gaebler (1993) note that NPM called on government to focus on achieving *results* rather than primarily conforming to procedures. In order to achieve this it had to adopt market-like competition, innovations and entrepreneurial strategies. In order to be ‘market-like’, government and public administration is called on to be ‘customer-driven’ and to rely on market-based mechanisms to deliver public service. A recent focus on procurement issues also emphasise the bringing to bear of corporate business practices on government procurement (Blunt, 2010; OECD SIGMA, 2007).

Related to NPM was the adoption of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the public sector, with tools and concepts borrowed from the Japanese manufacturing world, though with its roots in the US (Morgan and Murgatroyd, 1997, p.35). To varying degrees, the tenets of NPM have been picked up in most of the industrialised world. Hood (2000, p.1) notes: “everyone knows New Public Management is an international or even global phenomenon”. As a result, most developed countries have experienced sweeping changes to their administrations over the last 30 years. This change has been spurred on by globalisation itself and the need to be competitive, accelerated by changes in technology, particularly Information Technology (IT).

New Zealand and the UK are regarded as having adopted and applied NPM most enthusiastically, as have most other Anglo-Saxon countries, particularly Australia and the US. However, NPM is not as straightforward and beneficial as it might at first appear. Evidence for the success of some later NPM reforms is as mixed as the number of papers on the subject. Even NPM ‘staples’ such as improved business planning and performance management systems took 20 years to take hold within the UK civil service (Hood, 1995). In the UK the administrative disaggregation associated with NPM created an increasing number of Executive Agencies responsible for a wide range of individual service delivery functions. Executive Agencies had been created from 1988 onwards following a report commissioned by Margaret Thatcher (Jenkins et al., 1988) and were specifically aligned with Anglo-American business models (James, 2001). Perversely, though, these types of original NPM reforms, such as the creation of Executive Agencies, then partly contributed to the growing need for ‘joined-up’ government as single agencies began to operate in silos. Subsequently, the UK Coalition Government is currently stepping back from Executive Agencies and is reversing the policy. The Public Bodies Bill 2010 proposed a reduction of approximately 200 ‘Quangos’; ‘Smaller Government: Shrinking the Quango State’ was published on 7 January 2011 by the UK Public Administration Select Committee.

UK experience of civil service reform around NPM values from 1999 to 2005, heavily backed by central government, was therefore only partially successful according to Bovaird and Russell (2007). They note that central elements of the reform process, such as achieving ‘joined-up working’ across government, were slow to take hold. The concept of joined-up government was introduced by Tony Blair’s incoming Labour administration in 1997 precisely to address some of the ‘wicked’ cross-government challenges of the day and as a way to force government departments to work more closely together (Richards and Smith, 2006, p.1060). Even in developed states such as the UK, progress on civil service reform has been notoriously slow (Peters and Savoie, 1998). Hammerschmid et al. (2011), in a wide-ranging review of NPM evaluations, notes that despite the movement’s emphasis on indicators and evidence, there have been surprisingly few all-encompassing evaluations anywhere:

This lack of evaluations or impact studies has to do with the ill-defined nature of NPM, the variety of NPM models often with only a token recognition of NPM and the incompleteness of many NPM-style reforms. Measuring ‘results’ of public-management reform is therefore slippery (p.197).

The OECD (2003, p.2), a general supporter of NPM, also noted that NPM sometimes produced undesirable, unexpected results. In the USA, despite enthusiastic support for NPM where they passed a Government Act to force the pace of improved performance in Federal Bodies¹⁵, Jones and Thompson (1999, p.55) note that “government’s most important functions are inherently unmanageable, otherwise they could be performed quite satisfactorily by business”. Christensen and Lægreid (2006, 2007) and the OECD (2005) have drawn attention to the fundamental differences between the public and private sectors, and suggested that the blanket importation of private sector management nostrums has not necessarily been a success in the public sector. Denhardt and Denhardt (2007, pp.12–15) have suggested that:

This perspective of the public administrator is narrow and is poorly suited to achieve democratic principles such as fairness, justice, participation and the articulation of shared interest.

They note, however, that the disadvantages of NPM are defined compared to *old* public administration rather than in comparison to what has become known as administration based

¹⁵ The US Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) was enacted to promote strategic planning and performance management in the US Federal Government. It was, unusually, an Act of Congress.

on new public service values. NPM has even been pronounced 'dead' by some, though there is an acknowledgement that:

New developments accrete and accumulate while older trends are still playing out and apparently flourishing. Relatively established ideas move from leading-edge countries or sectors to implementation in previous laggard areas, even as the same ideas are being repudiated or reversed in the erstwhile pioneering locations (Dunleavy et al., 2005).

Alford and Head (2008, pp.9–11) note that neither traditional public administration nor NPM are conducive to grappling with the wicked problems faced by public administration. They lay the blame in traditional public administration on the hierarchical bureaucratic structures and interest-based politics, and, in NPM, they suggest the 'managerialist' approach leads to sub-programme competition, competing policy priorities and, at worst, 'turf wars' between agencies. NPM has also undoubtedly led to a proliferation of individual agencies pursuing a single purpose or delivering a single service, hardly reflecting a whole of government approach.

Developing countries also experienced NPM. Manning (2001) gathered evidence from World Bank projects through the 1990s, and synthesised it with the evidence of others such as Girishankar (2000). He concluded that NPM was no more able than old public administration to provide the governments of developing countries with the incentives and the capacity to address poverty and provide better services. However, this contradicts the Bank's own 2000/1 World Development Report which concluded that new public management had great potential to reduce poverty and that good government institutions are generally associated with higher incomes. Polidano (1999) concluded that NPM in developing countries was being taken up in a variety of guises but success was difficult to measure. Sarkar (2006), drawing on evidence from Singapore to Bangladesh, examines and analyses factors influencing the success and failure of NPM initiatives in the developing world. He concludes that the critical factors influencing positive progress include more advanced economic development, rule of law and presence of reasonable administrative infrastructure. Unsurprisingly countries such as Bangladesh, which have none of the above, had very limited success in implementing NPM reforms. Mathiasen (1999) notes that donors continue to promote NPM tools and practices, such as contracting out, even if these have been discredited and discarded by the public sector in OECD countries.

The Public Service Value Approach

Hood (1991) had already given notice that NPM would be criticised in terms of a claimed contradiction between equity and efficiency values, and that any critique which was to survive NPM's claim to infinite re-programmability must be couched in terms of possible conflicts between administrative values. In more recent times, the cracks in old public administration theory, and the perceived conflicts with the market-based private sector values of NPM, have given rise to new thinking and an interest in increasing transparency and accountability, and democratic values expressed in greater citizen participation (Deighton-Smith, 2004; Doig and McIvor, 2003). O'Flynn (2007, p.353) notes the growing attempts to redefine the state, its purpose, and ultimately ways of functioning, operating, and managing. Drawing heavily on the work of Moore (1995) and the now famous 'strategic triangle' that emphasises the role of the state in creating public value, O'Flynn states that NPM marginalised notions of public value in its quest for efficiency and costs savings. The enthusiasm for public service values is therefore also linked in part to a new pragmatism in public service concerned with identifying what works rather than being focused or hung up on theoretical issues around the institution (Alford and Hughes, 2008). More recently, Denhardt and Denhardt (2007) have set out the elements of a 'new public service' that attempts to reassert the values of democracy, citizenship, and the public interest as the pre-eminent values of public administration.

New Institutionalism and Change Management Theory

Public sector reform and management entails making or encouraging deliberate changes to the organisation, structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them to run better. Organisational and structural change to administration can encompass new organisations, as well as extinguishing, merging or splitting public sector organisations. Process change may include capacity building, redesigning processes or systems around specific services, development of delivery processes and service models, building civil service skills in service delivery, improving accountability for service delivery, design and implementation of performance management systems and setting appropriate achievable quality standards. All of these actions suggest a focus on some sort of change. Change management theory and new institutional theory may therefore be particularly relevant here as it is the systematic application of knowledge, tools, and resources of change that provide organisations with processes to achieve their change or reform strategy.

Given this focus it is therefore unsurprising that there has been a recent resurgence of interest in institutional theory. Institutional theory is regarded by many as the dominant approach to the understanding of organisations and institutions (Greenwood and Oliver, 2008, p.2). DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991), generally acknowledged as the founders of this approach, emphasise that organisations are influenced by their institutional context. The principal tenet is that organisations eventually become homogenous in structure, culture and output where they share an organisational field or “organisations that, in aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991, p.148). The homogeneity is sometimes referred to as *isomorphism*. The assumption is that organisations become increasingly similar through similar institutional forces acting on them. They also change or evolve to survive when subjected to reform initiatives but do not necessarily become more efficient as a result (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, p.147).

As an example of homogeneity in public sector organisations, this occurrence can be observed in the dissemination of NPM tenets such as performance management indicators which were swiftly disseminated by the UK central executive and then taken up by UK Executive Agencies (Pollit, 2006). Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge (2009) also examine this phenomenon in 100 UK local authorities. They find organisational patterns reflecting isomorphism, common pressures influencing compliance with common practices across various fields of administration; this may seem rather obvious to the outsider in that the central civil service authority issues strong guidance and, unsurprisingly, lower-level government organs implement it. What is more interesting is the suggestion that organisational isomorphism places restrictions on organisational performance because the organisations are more concerned with establishing their legitimacy and complying with directives rather than necessarily striving for efficiency. This may have important implications if one considers, as will be done later, the potentially perverse impacts of donor practices on FCASs.

Returning to DiMaggio and Powell; they elaborate that institutions move towards and maintain institutional ‘norms’ through coercive, mimetic, and normative processes. Institutional theory posits that organisational environments “are characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organisations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy” (Scott and Meyer 1983, p.149). This resonates strongly with practitioner experience in a developing country context. In a preliminary study of the

establishment of six different Public Service Commissions (PSCs) in six different states by Wilson (2010), the PSCs demonstrate significant similarities; unsurprising as all were recently created and given primary responsibilities for managing the public service. One reason posited by Wilson for the homogeneity in structure and output is that they were created from an identical template designed by international practitioners with similar post-conflict experience working within an informal but connected international practitioner network.

The possibility that seeking out legitimacy may come at the expense of technical efficiency was also recognised by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Zucker (1977). They imply that reform efforts may just scratch the surface of organisations, as the ‘core’ will nearly always be resistant to change. The implications for working in public administration in conflict-affected situations, where there is limited knowledge of local logic, beliefs, culture and societal norms and relations, suggest that reaching the core and making real reforms is extremely difficult. Reform in such circumstances is likely to be ‘skin deep’. While there is little research on this phenomenon in FCASs, Bliesmann de Guevera (2010) notes that external interventions in statebuilding tend to build formal ‘modern state facades’ whilst informal methods of working exist beneath the surface. Van Bijlert (2009, pp.166–168) is bolder and suggests that in the case of the Afghan state there is an assumption that the state and therefore its institutions exist, whereas the reality is very different:

This ‘assumption of a state’ means that responsibilities are assigned to largely imaginary institutions. These institutions are made up of people who may inhabit the offices belonging to their positions, but are otherwise largely pursuing their own agendas. They look like institutions to us, because we assume that the people involved somehow identify with their assigned (depersonalised) tasks and responsibilities. Afghans, however, immediately recognize the amalgams of interests, intrigues and potential sources of patronage.

Unfortunately, Van Bijlert does not provide much in the way of concrete evidence to support her assertion, however true it may appear to the observer.

In further articles, Scott (1987; and 2001, p.139) notes that institutions face pressure to conform to externally defined belief systems and related practices that predominate in such fields. A concrete application of this theory is found in the transition countries of Eastern Europe where the OECD has supported the EC in preparing countries to join the EU. SIGMA is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union which supports public

administration reform efforts in 13 countries in transition and provides advice on implementation of the European Administrative Space (EAS)¹⁶.

‘Institutionalism’, however, goes beyond merely legal requirements for common design and standards. It utilises social theory as a way of examining the way institutions *react* with one another and society more generally. Institutions operate in an environment consisting of other institutions that directly influence one another: what is known as the ‘institutional environment’ Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Zucker (1977). In an FCAS, where the International Community, as a collection of institutions itself, is highly engaged with the host government, it is likely that they will impact substantially on the host country’s public administration bodies. Andrews (nd), in a recent undated working paper, notes one line of thought that suggests:

External pressures influence some organisations more than others. Organisations that are influenced by external pressures are commonly dependent on other organisations, uncertain about which institutional structures to adopt, facing ambiguous goals and occupying visible organisational fields with a small number of dominant players and few accepted codified organisational models.

He also posits that these organisations will allow certain externally visible functions and structures to adapt to external pressures but the core will remain strong and impervious to change. A second line of thought from Andrews suggests that organisations resist change when it is inconsistent with current values or instilled processes. In other words, they protect the ‘core’ of their organisation (logic, beliefs, culture). He goes on to note that:

Organisations limit external influence by decoupling this core from more visible peripheral dimensions that are less traumatic to reform, where it will be more willing to comply with external scripts and hence shore up needed legitimacy.

In a second article, Andrews (2010, p.3) posits that there are significant limits to reform at the ‘core’ of institutions because institutions focus, as noted previously, on establishing their legitimacy rather than efficiency. Andrews draws together his previous research and recent

¹⁶ See also: SIGMA (1998) Preparing Public Administrations for the European Administrative Space, SIGMA PAPERS: No. 23.OECD; and SIGMA (2007) European Principles for Public Administration, SIGMA PAPERS: No.27, OECD. These two documents set out clearly the standards to which EU candidate countries are expected to conform in order to align their public administrations to those of EU member states. Conflict-affected states like the Former Yugoslavia Republic Countries have all followed these OECD guidelines. SIGMA-supported countries are Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

research by others in a new book and concludes that many of the reforms brought to countries like Afghanistan are broadly similar. Agencies like the World Bank and IMF utilise a similar palette of possible solutions in response to the need for institutional development (Andrews 2013, pp.1–8). He examines the World Bank’s project database and identifies three broad areas of intervention: building market-friendly governments; creating disciplined government; and modernising and formalising government processes. As these reforms drive the international agenda, a whole host of indicators have been developed to measure progress on these reforms as a priority. These indicators are primarily the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) and the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). The indicators and grades associated with them are therefore de facto formulated on a Western understanding of what is ‘good’ government. Andrew concludes correctly that this implies the approach to reform of PSM and the indicators used to measure progress must therefore describe the West’s understanding of what is generally accepted to be ‘good and appropriate’ for all countries, and what solutions may be most appropriate to get there. However, he also points out that this agenda has produced, at best, mixed results, and is mainly a disappointment. Reforms often ignore context, are inappropriate, beyond the reach of many countries and, in the end, mainly focused on working through ‘champions’ whose impact is, at best, mixed.

Picking up on the issue of context in the developing world, New Institutional Theory took off in the 1990s, spurred on by the wave of post-Cold War institutional change and the sluggish response to economic reform in sub-Saharan Africa (Booth, 2011). Nearly 20 years previously, Alford and Friedland (1985) coined the term ‘institutional logics’ to further the debate by suggesting that institutions are products of the contending orders of capitalism, state bureaucracy and political democracy. These forces have their own internal logic that defines how individuals and organisations behave. Essentially, Alford and Friedland state that understanding the social and institutional context is the key to understanding organisations and individual behaviour. This line of inquiry is linked to the earlier institutional and organisation theory discussions that sought to explain organisation change and the propensity for change to occur. Both in the Western world and in developing countries, the thirst for positive change and improved institutions led to the development of ‘models of change’ first applied in the business environment.

Two well known models of change are Kotter's (1996) eight-step model for transforming organisations and Jick's (1993) tactical ten-step model for implementing change. Despite the wealth of initiatives and approaches to bringing about management change, Sirkin et al. (2005) reported that two out of three transformation initiatives in businesses fail, indicating clearly that some interests may be hostile to the intervention.

It is posited by Ashworth et al. (2007) that limits to reform are lower where change agents or champions exist to carry reform through and where organisations are open to change.

However, as Andrews indicates:

Recent work on good governance implies a one best way model of effective government. This work has isomorphic influences on academic, donor and reform engagements in developing countries (Andrews, 2008; 2009).

The proposition is that donor governments and international finance institutions use their hefty external influence to place requirements and expectations on host governments to meet development objectives such as 'effective accountable institutions' and 'good governance' that are rooted in external logic and values. Pritchett and de Meijer (2011) suggest also that this approach is flawed and leaves states in a perpetual 'capability trap'. Pritchett (Pritchett et al., 2010, p.1) introduced the idea of 'state capability traps' in 2010 noting that failures are encouraged by:

Big development (that) encourages progress through importing standard responses to predetermined problems. This in turn again encourages 'isomorphic mimicry' as a technique of failure: the adoption of the forms of other functional states and organisations which camouflages a persistent lack of function.

They also note that an inadequate understanding of the theory of institutional change means that the expectations of the International Community (IC) are out of step with the ability of administrative systems to implement even the most routine of tasks.

Boyne and Walker (2004), summarising research and empirical evidence on the performance of public organisations, note that most research concentrates on the external environment.

Public agencies are seen as trapped by their socioeconomic contexts and the rule of administration and law which constrain their performance. Other authors such as Greenwood et al. (2008, pp.3–48) have suggested that the issues of power, conflict and interests need to be unpacked further if institutional theory can continue to be relevant to the understanding of organisations, and how and why they behave as they do.

In the FCAS the host country is often beset by internal conflict, at serious risk of corruption, and dominated by key power brokers. It is known from other research that FCASs also tend to be afflicted by corruption and patronage networks (Le Billon, 2008) and that such corruption by public officials impacts badly on state legitimacy. Reform requires thousands of public officials to change their behaviour for real impact. Some officials can improve the way government reforms itself but other uncooperative, even corrupt, officials may not implement the change. Previous research demonstrates there will almost certainly be ‘spoilers’, as noted by Stedman (1997).

DiMaggio (1988) suggested that for institutional theory to continue to be relevant it has to take into account who is doing what to change things in an organisation, who are the institutional entrepreneurs and how new organisations are created. Herein lies part of the problem with FCASs; the very agencies involved in the exporting of the ‘standard measures of support’ are the ones who sponsor the analytic work, who provide guidance on project design, approve such designs and pay for the interventions. They also frequently employ the external technical assistance. The role of the host country, with the most knowledge of local context, is often as a bystander in the process.

Following on from the above, a discussion of principal–agent theory is pertinent. Principal–agent theory has been applied in disciplines as wide-ranging as international relations, law and accounting. However, as applied in disciplines such as sociology, political science and public administration, it is in essence a theory about contractual relationships between buyers and sellers (Waterman and Meier, 1998). Waterman and Meier suggest the principal–agent model makes two assumptions: that there is a conflict between the different goals of the principals and the agents, and that agents may have more information than their principals, which results in an information asymmetry between them. This can create serious problems if an implicit aspect of principal–agent theory assumes the principal is competent to make and supervise the agent work.

Barzelay (2000, p.190) suggests the theory is mainly concerned with the economic analysis of relationships between principals and agents. Miller (2005) applies the theory to political science and political relationships. In the public sector in a developing world context, Fyson (2009) applies the theory to a situation where the principal is the donor or the government (in the form of ministers and ministries) who contract the agents, international consultants, to

undertake work in public finance management. She finds that problems with the consultant–government–donor triangle, as opposed to a single principal–agent relationship, have contributed to poor development outcomes. In essence she suggests that it is not clear who is accountable to whom, thus fudging the principal–agent relationship. However, this does not consider all the various principal–agent relationships and thus may be underestimating the scale or complexity of the problem, picking an argument only with the consultants. Links and extensions to the principal–agent issue are also explored further in chapter 2.5.

Agency theory is particularly applicable in the public sector, therefore, because of the potential wide array of principal–agent relationships and the scope for them to be confused. Some of these relationships as they pertain to FCASs are described at table 2.2:

Principal	Agent
Parliament (politicians)	Government officials (bureaucrats)
Citizens	Politicians
Donors	Contracted Consultants
Donors	International Organisations e.g. UN Agencies
Government Ministries	Contracted Consultants
Contracted Consultants	Subcontracted Consultants

Table 2.2 Some Principal–Agent Relationships in FCASs

Eisenhardt (1989, p.58) suggests that agency theory deals with questions that arise because “the desires or goals of the principal and agent conflict and it is difficult or expensive for the principal to verify what the agent is actually doing”. She does not consider the reverse situation which is frequently the case in FCASs. Stoker (1998, p.20) notes that the principal does not have complete control over the agent and has only partial information about the agent’s behaviour. In the FCAS situation, as noted in the table above, there is a complex array of principal–agent relationships, often indirect. On the assumption that the lack of clear principal–agent relationships may impact adversely on development outcomes, the research will look closely at these relationships, the power relations, incentives to reform and sanctions, risks and information asymmetry as a means to help explain the limits to reform.

Progress on Civil Service and Administrative Reform – the Reality

Regardless of the developmental setting, progress on public administration reform and CSAR in particular has proved difficult to achieve. One key problem is the difficulty in measuring progress.

Difficult to Measure Progress

The World Bank (2012a) notes that explicit theory about what works in PSM generally remains scarce in comparison to other policy fields. It is important to emphasise that the Bank is referring to PSM more generally in development contexts; the situation for CSAR in FCASs is, this research argues, even less well understood. If the dominant approach is one of building state capacity then this also suggests, or rather assumes, that it is possible to know whether you are making progress on CSAR: that capacity is increasing and thus so are administrative effectiveness and other related key measures. However, it is far from clear how best to monitor and evaluate progress on CSAR: what to measure, which indicators to use and how to collect data and measure it. Most approaches address individual and institutional capacity building that concentrate on improving institutional functionality and performance, improving strategy and structures and raising individual performance. Consequently, measures typically evaluate progress in human resource management, the legal framework for reform, conduct and performance of civil servants, depoliticising the public service and extent of collaboration. Monitoring and evaluating CSAR is therefore part of an ongoing wider debate that cannot be viewed in isolation from wider measurement of the public sector management systems, and, increasingly, notions of ‘good governance’.

The Bank (2012) claims that measuring improvements in outcomes is hard to attribute to public sector reforms as the results chain is so long. The Bank quotes the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Framework (PEFA) as a single good example of a set of indicators that measure performance in the area of public finance management but notes that data remains scarce or unavailable for many other core public sector management systems. This research suggests that improved Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems (ISPMS) *could* better measure the functioning or performance of public management systems but they are not easy to identify. The Bank notes that there are two main problems why this has not happened. Ambitious data collection efforts have failed due to their complexity and costs, and secondly:

There is significant uncertainty about which institutional arrangements are ‘better’ than others for development outcomes, i.e. there is no simple normative basis for evaluation (World Bank, 2012a)

The problem of measuring civil service performance through such indicators has also attracted very little attention by academics (World Bank, 2013, pp.1–7). Moreover, it is axiomatic that Western countries, those with ‘developed’ administrations providing a high level of services to their citizens, can also look very different from one another. Andrews (2008) notes that good government means different things to different people. Even in Western countries with mature and relatively stable administrations there are wide-ranging views on what the role of the public sector should be and how it is to be developed and managed, or indeed how big the public administration should be. Meyer-Sahling (2009) concluded that five years after accession by many new countries to the European Union (EU), the level of civil service professionalisation across these countries varied considerably, suggesting strongly that the wish to develop a *common* European Administrative Space to help guide state reforms is not really attainable.

In the context of FCASs, the debate concerning indicators has centred on the work being sponsored by the OECD as part of the International Dialogue of Statebuilding and Peacebuilding¹⁷. The new indicators that are intended to demonstrate progress on key statebuilding tasks includes the dimension of public administration. The indicators, however, appear to suggest that overall quality of public administration can be measured by the quality of Public Finance Management (PFM) and more specifically by simply applying (again) the PEFA scoring system and some simple measures of overall corruption. This seemingly ignores measures of all the underlying contributors to overall improvements in public administration. It might also partly explain the zeal in international organisations for pursuing PFM reforms above all else; the discussion around indicators of public sector management currently defaults to measures of PFM.

Scott (2011, p.i), through a comprehensive literature review, has shown that whilst interventions in public sector governance reform have been mainly technical:

¹⁷ International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Working Group on Indicators: Progress Report on Fragility Assessments and Indicators, 4 December 2012. Accessed 16 May 2013
<http://www.newdeal4peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/progress-report-on-fa-and-indicators-en.pdf>.

PSG (public sector governance) has weak diagnostic tools and no globally recognised conceptual framework which means that reforms are often based on poor diagnostic work and are missing a robust 'theory of change'.

Scott's literature review was, however, again focused on information gleaned from generally benign settings. This research seeks to demonstrate that even less about PAR and CSAR specifically in FCASs. The term 'governance' itself is full of ambiguity and uncertainty. Fukuyama (2013) asks what governance is, pointing to the poor state of empirical measures in the quality of states. The problem of measurement arises again: which dimensions of governance matter most, and to whom, when good governance is measured. It also begs the question of why development organisations routinely prescribe propositions and activities without ever being held accountable for the results.

It is likely that the real difficulty lies not in technical design or policy choices to improve capability but in understanding and addressing other underlying problems that are beyond the influence of public sector management projects, many of which militate against success. Many of these problems are what might be termed 'wicked' in nature. These are the sort of problems that are "messy, devious, and reactive, i.e. they fight back when you try to 'resolve' them" (Ritchey nd, p.1). The suggestion is that adopting primarily technocratic approaches, as has been the experience to date, will continue to fail.

Lessons from the so-called 'transition economies' have been garnered by Meyer-Stahling on behalf of SIGMA. He notes that, whilst progress on CSR in the European Administrative Space (EAS) demonstrates utilisation of a mix of old public administration models and NPM, success with reform has not been uniform; indeed, progress has even been reversed in some countries. Despite European administrations starting from a strong base and with a long history of administration and organisation, Meyer-Stahling (2009) key findings from the assessment of the latest round (5th) on EU enlargement illustrate a long catalogue of problems experienced with reform:

- Civil service reform is first and foremost a domestic endeavour; civil service developments in CEE countries have primarily been the result of domestic political dynamics; international and in particular European influence on civil service professionalisation has been limited.
- Civil service reforms materialised only when they were perceived as necessary. Domestic political conditions need to mature to make reforms possible. Reforms happen only when they are perceived as necessary by domestic actors who are

sufficiently influential. The speed of reforms cannot be imposed and trying to accelerate history has costs.

- Early and determined reforms paid off, but protracted reform periods were counterproductive.
- Contested or failed reforms politicised the civil service reform debate; lustration laws further complicated the situation
- Civil service reforms do not take root in polarised politics.
- Establishing independent civil service offices does not work.
- Reforms produced better results if political responsibility was allocated to a minister.
- Sidelining the Ministry of Finance from the core of civil service reform was counterproductive.

Similarly in Africa, Lienert (1998) notes mixed results at best. More evidence from sub-Saharan African emphasises the importance of understanding context (Analoui et al. 2008), the impact of a lack of support for civil service policy reform from host countries, poor leadership and corporate responsibility and, again, the importance of grounding reform on a realistic assessment of present and foreseeable political and economic realities (Therkildsen, 2000). In Tanzania there has been some evidence of improvements. Morgan et al. (2010) argue that three factors helped improvements: organisational positioning, development of a range of required competencies and capabilities; and sequencing of the reform activities in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP). In Uganda, improvements have also been measured in the reduction and control of overall civil service numbers with commensurate positive improvements in salaries and conditions of service for remaining staff. There have also been improvements at the centre of government and greater discretion over resource allocation. Corruption has been tackled but reforms have been less effective at eradicating poverty and improving service delivery (Clarke and Wood, 2001).

Another recent study of State Performance and Capacity in the Pacific States by Laking (2010) on behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) examines strengths and weaknesses. The main findings relevant to PAR suggest that the Pacific states, and conflict-affected states like Fiji, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste *are* included in the analysis, suggest that success rates with civil service reform are low as stakeholders do not cooperate. Laking concludes that capacity limitations, patronage, and nepotism significantly threaten the quality of civil services:

Nepotism and patronage as a basis for appointments is widespread. Public service commissions, commonly charged with protecting the merit principle of appointment

and political neutrality in civil services, have either been powerless to halt these developments or actively collusive in them.

Worldwide country and project evaluations by the World Bank have also demonstrated slow progress (World Bank OED, 1999; World Bank 2002). The World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) has more recently carried out a major, comprehensively peer-reviewed evaluation of their PAR interventions in 2008. The Paper notes that whilst Bank support for reform has grown notably in recent years this has not been matched by results (IEG World Bank 2008). The main findings, underpinned by a comprehensive analysis of project interventions and academic reviews, note that support for PAR and Civil Service Reform (CSR) improved in some areas but there were shortcomings. Civil service and administrative reform improved in fewer than half of the World Bank's borrowing countries. Performance improved in some areas, but generally not for the Civil Service. The report concludes that analysis was often absent in the Civil Service and Administration areas, which contributed to differing outcomes. Other possible causes noted include the lack of a coherent strategy, weak diagnostic work and lack of clear diagnostic tools to address reform issues, though the authors acknowledge the inherent political difficulties in dealing with the civil service. Critically, the IEG Evaluation noted above did not include analysis of recent World Bank and other support to PAR in conflict-affected countries. Neither does it look at administration in the security sector as this is not within the World Bank mandate. More recently the Bank has suggested pursuing *incremental* civil service reforms without necessarily seeking the ideal harmonisation of government structures in fragile environments. It also makes the case for programming interventions over a longer time frame than the traditional three-year project cycle (World Bank WDR, 2011).

The lessons from benign settings both in developed and developing countries are, therefore, that PAR has experienced patchy success and, in certain key areas such as CSAR, has low success rates. Unsurprisingly some critics of the Bank have suggested that it's low success rate has continued because it rolls out old 'formulas' to address critical issues (Shepherd, 2003; Andrews, 2008). With regard to administration reform, it seems that governments often focus on the wrong things, make promises they cannot keep and fail to get started on the important tasks in time (Manning and Evans, 2003). The general criticism is accepted by the Bank as they openly admit their performance in this area to be 'moderately unsatisfactory' (World Bank, 2008, p.72).

Moreover, there is also no specific academic research in peer-reviewed journals into causes of failure in public administration reform in the FCASs that have most recently vexed international policymakers in Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan. What little evaluation evidence there is does not provide encouragement and is focused on identifying high-level generic causes such as low capacity, poor leadership, low resources and poor prioritisation. The specific case of Afghanistan and the evidence is reviewed further in Chapter 4.

In FCASs, Middlebrook and Peake (2008) note that little systematic work has been done on what the IC can and should do to strengthen the capacities of post-war states to mobilise, allocate, and spend public resources. Their research was mainly focused on SSR and the implications of financing peacebuilding, security, stabilisation and development. They posit that increased security provides the springboard for economic growth and political stability. The whole discussion on security, finance and development is linked inextricably to the building of effective state institutions. As Middlebrook and Peake (2008) note:

Traditionally, donors have ignored the security sector, in favour of sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure. However, in most post-conflict countries security sector spending (armed forces, police and judicial services) often dominates both the operational and capital budget of government.

Ball (2002) has expanded the concerns with the security sector beyond public finance into wider considerations of good administration and governance. The ability to implement principles of good governance in the security sector is, as with other crucial sectors, reliant on the existence of institutions that function well and on capable human resources. However, Ball does not go into the detail of why public sector reforms so often fail.

The one area of PAR that does receive significant investment in FCASs is PFM, and much of this support goes to budget reform. However, in the recent annual CAPE Conference held in the ODI London (November 2013), one conference blog notes¹⁸:

The uncomfortable truth ... is that the old consensus on budget reform (stemming from the 1990s), based broadly on the idea that developing countries should follow the approach to reform followed in advanced countries, has proved largely unsuccessful. According to the World Bank's CPIA ratings, PFM systems in developing countries hardly increased during the last ten years.

¹⁸ ODI London CAPE Conference Proceedings 2013. Conference blog accessed at <http://blog-pfm.imf.org/pfmblog/2013/12/is-there-a-new-consensus-on-pfm-reform.html>.

The conference cited a number of areas of deficiencies similar to those noted previously: capacity constraints, too fast a pace of reform, lack of understanding of local political economy and problems with prioritisation and sequencing . In FCASs, the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) rating system notes that of the nine countries that have CPIA scores and were classified as post-conflict since 2000, eight have not yet attained a 'satisfactory' rating. The CPIA ratings underscore the serious problems with public administration in FCASs (ODI, 2013)

Given the extreme difficulties in achieving reforms in the civil service, it is perhaps unsurprising that attention is moving elsewhere. There is recognition that is important to build for the long-term development of public institutions and the staff who work in the institutions, but there is growing evidence that both growth and stability require more immediate tangible improvements in service delivery. New evidence is suggesting that improvements to services can be productive. Eldon et al. (2005), in two case studies on Nigeria and Sierre Leone look at the contribution that developing health systems and services can make to wider statebuilding initiatives. They conclude that health sector strengthening can contribute to statebuilding in the health sector. It can help build legitimacy and capacity, putting health on the statebuilding agenda. Supportive of this early work, in recent research work undertaken in Timor Leste by the Justice for the Poor Project there is a clear suggestion that the new state of Timor Leste, working in partnership with local people, has to respond to much greater expectations as to what the state should provide for their welfare. Research reports that communities in Timor are invoking local idioms of governance, grounded in social obligation and reciprocal exchange to define their state. The implications in Timor are that demand is high among local communities for the extension of the state footprint through service delivery but in doing so the preservation of long term reciprocity is also sought. Hurried, ad hoc, one-off interventions are thought to be unreliable and probably corrupt. Long-term ongoing exchanges between community and state are likely to be more productive (Justice for the Poor 2010).

Certainly there is some history of the key role of the growth in public services in achieving European statebuilding and nationbuilding goals. Van de Walle and Scott (2011) wonder if fragile states can learn any lessons from the Europe experience. Unfortunately, their attempts

to answer some of these questions simply raise more doubts about the applicability of our interventions.

Conclusion

The review so far has demonstrated the evolving nature of PAR theory, which appears to describe most countries' public administrations as being a mix of the long-lasting Weberian governance paradigm with varying application and adoption of NPM tenets. The literature emphasises that countries do take different paths depending on context and the distinct institutional identity of the individual public (civil) service. In recent years there is evidence that NPM is perhaps still alive; experimentation continues, sometimes with unpredictable results. Western countries are, however, seeing a resurgence of interest in promoting public service values, whilst still striving for efficiency gains. The literature also increasingly features considerations of power (authority), status and legitimacy, going beyond simply the capacity issues.

Despite the fact that there is a great deal of research in public administration, albeit mainly focused on the developed and developing countries, attempts to support and reform public administrations in more benign Western and development contexts have met with limited, and at most patchy, success over the last 25 years. The academic literature suggests that universal applicability of the models is questionable given the very different circumstances of both Western and developing countries, with Andrews (2008, p.171) asserting that it is now largely accepted as fact that national cultures affect the structure and performance of public administration but that very little is known about how and why. New institutional theory, in particular, suggests that, in any event, many organisations are impervious to change at their core and organisations frequently alter only their external facade to court legitimacy and approval. Unfortunately the latter has not been tested in an FCAS although one or two authors have suggested this may be the case. The review of institutional theory and principal-agent theory suggests that FCASs may present a complex instance of the principal-agent problem but that also change management theory and new institutionalism can help identify some of the reasons why current approaches to reform may have proved so difficult to implement in practice.

2.3 The Fragile and Conflict Affected State

This section looks at the emergence of what has become known as the ‘fragile state’, characterised by failure and/or collapse, its causes and consequences and its strong links to conflict. Following the devastating impact of 9/11, coupled with the increasing incidence of small civil wars and the growth of international terrorism, the new concept of failing, failed or ‘fragile’ states has gained currency. The Crisis States Research Centre at LSE, launched in 2001, the same year as 9/11, defines a “failed state” as a condition of “state collapse” – that is, a state that can no longer perform its basic security and development functions and has no effective control over its territory and borders. The slow development of relatively new states has also raised concerns and LSE notes that the concept of underdevelopment is linked:

“Late developing countries, where processes of economic development have lagged behind the richest countries are generally “fragile states”, in the sense that institutional arrangements are vulnerable to crisis and breakdown” (LSE, 2001).

A significant number of academic and other papers have emerged around several themes examining state fragility, causes and consequences, and a central theme of how to recognise and save failed states, including Helman and Ratner’s seminal early paper in 1993 on saving failed states. Others such as Rotberg (2003); Fearon and Laitin (2003); RAND (2008); Carment, Yiyagadeesen and Prest (2008); Chauvet and Collier (2008); Iqbal and Starr (2008); Marshall and Cole (2008); and Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) have all examined various aspects of state failure, state weaknesses and possible solutions. Stewart and Brown (2009) suggest that states can fail in three basic ways: service failures, authority failures and failures of legitimacy. In more recent work, Call (2010, p.303) points to capacity gaps, legitimacy gaps and security gaps but maintains that all three gaps may not be present in a single state at one time.

Other authors such as Collinson et al. (2010) have examined fragility, stabilisation and the implications for humanitarian action, as fragile states often do not meet even basic development targets. The World Development Report (2011) notes that not one fragile country will achieve a single Millennium Development Goal (MDG) by 2015. The WDR also notes that countries with weak government, rule of law, and control of corruption have a 30%–45% higher risk of civil war, and significantly higher risk of extreme criminal violence than other developing countries. Recent empirical and academic research has shown that the presence of corruption also lies at the core of fragility in post-conflict environments (Husmann and Tisné, 2010; Dix and Jayawickrama, 2010).

The OECD Fragile States Group, a coalition of nearly all those countries and international organisations involved in providing support to FCASs, emphasises the point that it is not just *what* needs to be done in fragile states, but also *how* to do it. These countries have signed up to the ‘Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States’, a recognition that good engagement and support to statebuilding processes depends in part on ensuring a carefully sequenced, coherent programme of support across political, security, and economic domains (OECD, 2006, p.7). The authors above also note that FCASs present very specific challenges. Reflecting this, Development Partners (DPs) have committed to the ten Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States. This is based on the premise that action today can reduce fragility in the future.

Despite the academic work, new strategies and international attention, there is little agreement on definitions and a variety of conceptual approaches to ‘fragility’ exist. Thus various parties emphasise different viewpoints. The DFID (2005) definition suggests fragility occurs where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people. However, this definition is not limited to conflict states. There appears to be an emerging consensus around the OECD definition, which is as follows:

“States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations” (OECD 2007a).

However, the World Bank still use their Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) tool to define fragility, as do other international finance institutions, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The CPIA tool was designed as a way of assessing a country’s eligibility for concessional loans and is therefore technical in its assessment of ‘fragility’. In 2011, the Bank supplemented the CPIA with a new post-conflict indicator framework addressing some of the deficiencies in the CPIA.

The fragility debate has also spawned a wealth of attempts to compile qualitative and quantitative indices that attempt to rank how fragile a state is, a summary of which has been published by UNDP-GDI (2009). This report is a comprehensive review of all the current indicators of fragility, though noting that aggregate measures of fragility themselves pose problems. The London School of Economics LSE (2011, p.3) note that current indices of state performance and fragility are defective and have proposed a complicated mathematical

model based around social indicators as a solution. They accord with other authors such as Carment et al. (2006) and Fabra and Ziaja (2009) who have suggested that the multidimensional representation of statehood, or of state fragility, is both possible and convenient, even if the actual method to do so has not yet been agreed. Guillaumont and Jeanneney (2009) demonstrate the concern with measuring fragility and its impact, looking at the assessment of state fragility with a specific focus on economic vulnerability.

The international recognition of the presence of fragile states, many of which are immersed in serious conflict and which require special measures to build effective institutions and a functioning public administration, has prompted policy approaches that address fragility by both stabilising the situation and ultimately addressing the underlying cause of the fragility. This has resulted in increasing emphasis on understanding:

1. The causes of conflict;
2. How to prevent violent conflict, support international, national and local mechanisms to build peace and manage and resolve disputes peacefully, manage the conflict itself and strive to reach a peaceful settlement;
3. How to stabilise the situation; and
4. How to address the key requirements of what is a functioning state.

In 2007, partly as a response to the problems experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan and the operational difficulties faced in fragile states generally, a flurry of strategy documents emanated from international organisations targeting fragility and conflict including the World Bank (2007; 2007a), the German Government (BMZ 2007), the Netherlands (2007), the Council of the EU (2007), France (France Cooperation 2007), the ADB (2008), and DFID (2010). Additionally, national strategies have been complemented by new military doctrine. For example, the perceived serious threat that fragile states pose to international security is emphasised strongly in both the US and UK National Security Strategies, by the US Department of Defense in FM 3-07, and in the British military doctrine JDP 340, and by academics such as Krasner and Pascual (2005).

The UK produced its first National Security Strategy in 2008 partly as a response to these new threats and to “global instability and conflict, and failed and fragile states” (UK Cabinet Office 2008). The British military are acutely aware of the changing nature of conflict and the

challenges to both UK security and wider dimensions. MoD JDP340 (2010) succinctly notes the change and the challenge:

What is new is the reduced size of western conventional forces at a time when the demand upon highly capable, agile international forces is greater than at any time since the end of the Cold War. The need for police and paramilitary expertise is also greater than ever, all of which argues for building the capacity of indigenous forces as an urgent priority. Multinational operations are now the default, and multi-agency increasingly common. The complexities of both add new dimensions.

As long ago as 2002, Duffield et al. (2002, p.42) had suggested that rather than characterise Afghanistan as a ‘failed state’, the situation might better be described as:

An ‘emerging political complex’, an adaptive system that relies on multiple links to local and global networks and in which new, if often illiberal, forms of economic development and political control and legitimacy are evolving.

The notion is reprised by Boege et al. (2009) when they suggest ‘hybrid political orders’ to be a better moniker. Boege et al. suggest that simply defining states as fragile because the “hybridity of political order is perceived as a negative factor” is unhelpful. They suggest that a civil society that challenges government ought to be regarded as a legitimate component of statebuilding and peacebuilding strategies. This links to the notion that, if this behaviour is encouraged, then new forms of governance may emerge that are rooted in the local society. However, this may not look quite like Western government ideas of ‘good government’. In the case of Afghanistan it could be argued that, whilst Afghanistan became a state in 1919, it has rarely acted like a state with full sovereignty, even though it had a long history of statebuilding going back to 1747¹⁹. Whilst it could be argued that Afghanistan is not strictly a non post-colonial entity, having never been colonised, Authors such as Herbst (2004) have argued that the Westphalian sovereignty model “*should never have been accorded to fragile post-colonial entities with no history and experience of performing as or organizing a state*”. It follows that in such situations, attempting to impose a level of state organisation and control over a territory that has never experienced it, indeed actively resists it, may be counterproductive at best.

The new focus on fragility in the academic and policy literature also has strong links to peacebuilding, stabilisation, statebuilding and conflict prevention as approaches to understanding the occurrence of FCASs and how the IC can help states move out of fragility

¹⁹ The year that Ahmad Khan Abdali enters Kandahar and is elected king of the Afghans in a tribal assembly

and repair their broken institutions. Therefore the next section looks at conceptions of the state and statebuilding.

2.4 Conceptions of the State and Statebuilding

A state exists chiefly in the hearts and minds of its people; if they do not believe it is there, no logical exercise will bring it to life (Strayer, 1970).

In this section the renewed academic and policy interest in statebuilding is reviewed. This includes, *inter alia*, state formation and statebuilding theory, models of what constitutes a ‘functioning’ state and issues concerning state sovereignty. States come and go, as do empires and any number of hegemonies. The newest member of the United Nations family, South Sudan, came into being on 9 July 2011. In the last 20 years statebuilding has become a high priority for those engaged in providing support to FCASs, usually in the name of promoting security, peace, democracy and stability. The rising interest in statebuilding appeared to take root at the same time as the break-up of the former Soviet Union, with 14 new states established (1990–91), by the establishment of new states such as Timor Leste in 1999, and the disintegration of the Former Yugoslav Republic, with six new states established in the 1990s. The post-Cold-War diminution of the communist ‘threat’ also led to a growing interest in the possibilities for influencing new states that previously aligned themselves to the Soviets (Chandler, 2006). This influencing strategy included embracing the ‘Washington Consensus’²⁰ to encourage states to be liberal and democratic with economies based on the free market. Other features include drawing countries into NATO and other Western alliances such as the European Union.

The interest in statebuilding has also been driven by the imperative of external interventions to build, or rebuild, the institutions of weak, post-conflict or ‘failing’ states such as Iraq, DRC, Nepal, Rwanda and South Sudan, and countries such as Afghanistan that are perceived to pose a threat to Western democracies in that they may harbour Al-Qaeda, or other similar terrorist networks. Rotberg (2004, p.42) argues that statebuilding has “become one of the critical all-consuming strategic and moral imperatives of our terrorized time”. In 2008 the

²⁰ The Washington Consensus is associated with the policy shift in the 1990s that encouraged greater free-market policies and ‘market friendliness’ in developing countries – supported by the World Bank, IMF, other international finance institutions, and, most enthusiastically, by the US Government.

then President of the World Bank called Fragile States “the toughest development challenge of our era” (Zoellick, 2008, pp.68–71).

The ‘state’ is often posited as the foundation of the international political system but for a concept regarded as so intrinsic to modern-day political, economic and social life there is a surprising lack of agreed definition. Max Weber famously provided a definition of the state in his 1919 essay 'Politics as a Vocation', describing it thus:

Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Note that 'territory' is one of the characteristics of the state. Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the 'right' to use violence.

The Weberian definition therefore suggests that the state is the supreme authority. It also introduces the other essential tenets of the state – territory, legitimacy and a single community. Monopoly on the use of legitimate power and violence as a theme has endured to the stage where maintenance of security in today’s statebuilding interventions is the highest-priority objective which some believe has to be satisfied before other basic functions can be delivered. Weber’s starting point has since been expanded and developed further to link two additional concepts to his original definition, the concept of recognition of the state by other states (Soerensen, 2001) and action on delivery of services expected by the citizens of the state (DFID, 2009).

Historically, a number of figures and authors have greatly contributed to the formation of our thinking around states as well as elaborating the basis of constitutional theories; these include Jean Bodin, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, Machiavelli, John Locke, Voltaire, Diderot and Emmanuel Kant. The Enlightenment in the 17th century was a movement encapsulating rational, intellectual, scientific and cultural change that altered the history of nations such as France, Britain and the US. Enlightenment essentially sought for world affairs to be guided by rationality as opposed to superstition and fanaticism; it railed against absolute power and the monarchy. The enlightenment was the precursor to the French and American revolutions and social change leading to the establishment of many new nation states (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

The events of the 18th and 19th centuries established a new basis for politics, individual freedoms, human rights and the notion of the ‘liberal’ state, one that contains safeguards for the promotion of human and individual rights, the legacy of which remains today. This period of analysis and the subsequent 19th century were characterised by successive conflicts, territorial wars and colonisation. One of the most informative accounts of state formation is provided by Charles Tilley (1990) who focuses on the thesis that it was these 19th-century wars that essentially made the major European states: rivals were eliminated through local wars and conflict. Ottaway (2002) terms them ‘raw power states’.

It was not until 1933 that issues were clarified in international law. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States specifies in its first article that the state as a subject in international law should gather the following requirements: “a permanent population, a specified territory, a government and the capacity to exercise relations with other states” (International Conference of American States, 1934). Recent French authors, reflecting the strong French administrative law tradition, have largely echoed this very legally based definition (Dupuy, 2001; Denoix, 2004; Chevallier, 2004). Interestingly, Chevallier also adds the notion of an ‘administration’ as a key definer of a state: as the structured apparatus of coherent domination, to implement its power through the establishment of, for instance, “*des bureaucraties fonctionnelles*” (civil servants) to best serve the interest and functions of the state. Herein lies the link to Francophone notions of the civil servant as bound by the principles enshrined in constitutional arrangements and administrative law. Fukuyama (2011), describing the long and tortuous road to political order out of chaos, states that today, in a globalising world, the modern state is subject to an ever more expansive set of demands. This research posits that, as ‘expectations’ of the state have grown, so has the importance of the ‘good governance’ paradigm.

In countries like Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan the experience of state sovereignty has been one of constant internal conflict and of periodic oppression of civil society either as a whole or of specific minorities. No one party has a monopoly over violence. The local realities of these states, such as Somalia (and Somaliland), do not fit neatly into the Western concepts of the state (Bradbury, 2009; Eubank, 2011). Many communities have very little faith in the state to fulfil its obligation of protection, and societal expectations of the states cannot therefore be met. In the circumstances it is perhaps natural that in the current statebuilding literature there has been growing emphasis on the restoration of authority,

legitimacy and the building of the administrative capacity of the state. Moreover, the structure of the IC is now evidently not strictly composed of just states anymore. The incidence of parallel institutions and regional actors has grown; these include the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), OECD, Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the European Union. Initially, only the state itself was subject to international law; now public international law covers a wide variety of institutions.

The OECD (2008) concludes that states are a product of often-conflicting historical processes, rather than rational processes of institutional design. They quote Khan (1995, p.77) and Whaites (2008) to support their analysis. Both the OECD and DFID (2009) emphasise the twin dimensions of statebuilding: enhancing the ability of the state to function and the political processes that underpin the state–society relationship. This implies a strong focus on building the capacity of the state to deliver, essentially a technocratic approach. The OECD propose the following definition of statebuilding:

Statebuilding is an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state–society relations. Positive statebuilding processes involve reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state.

DFID (2009) emphasise that their approach is to *build* capable, accountable and responsive states (p.13). The suggestion is that it is possible, simply by adding resources, to create a viable state. This seems totally at odds with the OECD definition, which strongly suggests statebuilding has its roots in internal origins and causes. Chapman and Vaillant (2010, p.viii) also note that DFID may not recognise this:

DFID puts the effective state – as defined by the Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness (CAR) framework – at the centre of its work in fragile and non-fragile countries alike. The CAR framework does not capture the largely endogenous, nonlinear process of statebuilding – and with it the possible tensions and synergies with peacebuilding.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, authors such as Hameiri (2007) warn against taking a too-technocratic view of the state; he focuses again on the limits to institutionalism. Debiel and Langbach (2009) claim the purely technocratic approach misses the dynamics and idiosyncratic rules of local settings that effectively determine the success or failure of statebuilding projects. Kurz (2010), writing on Sierre Leone, notes that donors need to broaden their conceptual toolbox by paying more attention to local power structures, informal

institutions and historical path dependency. In doing so they may better understand whether social change can be influenced by external interventions. Chandler (2006) concludes that approaches that downplay the importance of locally derived political solutions, and ignore host country societal pressures and demands, will fail. Fawn and Richmond (2009) claim, *inter alia*, that the misunderstanding of local politics and a flawed approach to building peace and developing sovereignty mean that opportunities to promote ‘shared governance’ are lost and nothing more than an externally imposed ‘negative’ peace, such as that achieved in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Kosovo, is possible. Jones (2010, p.547) claims that outside intervention is naive in assuming that statebuilding efforts can help create a technically efficient state insulated from a society that is riven with social conflict.

Thus some recent conceptions of statebuilding refer to the process through which states enhance their ability to function and appear legitimate in the eyes of their citizens and the IC. For international actors however, there is a challenge in separating out preference for what a state ‘should be’ from what a survivable state actually ‘needs’ to be (DFID 2007). There is unfortunately little empirical research in peer-reviewed journals on the latter. Fritz and Brinkerhoff (2006) and Menocal (2007), suggest that statebuilding involves three essential areas of progress. These are:

1. **The development of a political settlement** – durable peace settlements have to incorporate all groups who have the power to destabilise state institutions. Conversely donor programmes may weaken state legitimacy through the development of parallel structures or by cutting deals with some groups to the detriment of others.
2. **The ‘core’ functions or survival functions of the state that are essential to the survival of the institutional framework** – security (to be able to control, if not monopolise, the use of violence); the ability to raise funds through taxation; the ability to make and apply laws; and being seen to do this.
3. **The state must also respond to an expected level of functionality** – expectations of its own citizens and those of external parties such as donors.

Other similar criticism accuses key entities such as the World Bank of, *inter alia*, being overly technical in its support to FCASs, paying insufficient attention to informal institutions and power structures (Bell, 2008; Rocha Menocal et al. 2008; Jones, 2010). The Bank is seemingly aware of this weakness and has drafted its own guidance on how to improve the

analysis of local political economy and others have followed suit (World Bank, 2007c; Adam and Dercon, 2009; DFID, 2009a).

Teskey et al. (2012, p.8) believe that there is now an emerging consensus, at least amongst academics (including Brinkerhoff, 2005; Carment et al., 2006), that there are three critical elements of the ‘core or underlying elements of governance’ in statebuilding and the role of the state. These are:

1. **Functional Authority** – the ability of a state to project its political power over all its territory.
2. **Political Legitimacy** – whether citizens feel the government has the right to govern, and whether they trust the government.
3. **Administrative Capacity** – the ability of the state to deliver or procure goods and services, design and implement policies, build infrastructure, collect revenue, dispense justice and maintain a conducive environment for the private sector (Teskey et al. 2012, pp.9–10).

Teskey et al. (2012) also emphasise the interdependence of the above elements, meaning that all three elements have to be pursued in tandem.

The OECD (2008) has acknowledged that their definition of statebuilding does not include an expanded reference to the more ‘institution-building’ definitions proposed by other authors. They note: “this contrasts with definitions of statebuilding that focus more narrowly on institutions, e.g. statebuilding as actions ... to establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state” (Call and Couzens, 2007); “the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones” (Fukuyama, 2004); or “the process of establishing the key institutions for a functioning state” (Fritz and Menocal, 2007). The OECD proposes that these activities are described more precisely as capacity development or institution-building. Despite their preference for a narrow definition of statebuilding, they still conclude that current policy thinking on FCASs defines building public administration capacity as part of overall efforts to build an ‘effective’ state and improve governance and has to be considered within the broader peacebuilding and statebuilding agenda (OECD, 2011).

Similarly, the majority of the available academic and policy literature characterises both the failure of states and many aspects of statebuilding in terms of weak state capacity and

‘instability’. If state failure is commonly defined as a ‘lack of capacity’ then it suggests most interventions to increase capacity will be of a technocratic nature. As an example of this in practice, the UK Government is committed to the building of Afghan institutions and its civil service as part of its ‘enduring partnership’ document signed in 2012 (UK FCO, 2012). The document commits the UK and Afghan governments to work together to deliver:

Reform of public administration, public finance management systems and the civil service, in order to increase the quality of Afghan civil servants, build more accountable and responsive services, and to help tackle corruption and reduce the scope for misuse of funds (UK FCO 2012, p.2).

Other ‘strategic partnership agreements’, such as that signed with the US Government, state similar objectives:

Afghanistan shall improve governance by increasing the responsiveness, and transparency of Afghan executive, legislative and judicial institutions so that they better meet the civil and economic needs of the Afghan people (US State Dept, 2012, p.8).

Conclusions

The above section has suggested that statebuilding in practice is a long and drawn-out process; in the case of Europe it has taken hundreds of years and considerable difficulties, not least major conflict, to bring about change. The literature in an early phase has been focused primarily on capacity issues such as holding back statebuilding, but more recent literature, backed up by a vigorous policy discussion, seems to have settled on statebuilding being centred around the three elements of administrative capacity and political legitimacy, and functional authority. The common problem is trying to define what one is trying to achieve and what is needed to support that goal or objective, particularly in terms of attaining the role/balance of these interdependent elements. There is a practical thread running throughout the statebuilding literature that suggests that if the basic or minimum requirements are met then the state can become viable, sustainable and legitimate over time. This unfortunately frames statebuilding as solely a technical activity – just apply the right amount of technical expertise, ensure previous lessons learnt elsewhere are applied and provide long-term support. Unfortunately, there is no agreement on the ‘approach’, a poor understanding of underlying society–state relations and certainly no ‘agreed’ list of functions.

The literature, both academic and policy-related, suggests that the resulting outcomes are usually unclear or ambiguous, exhibiting a wide variety of governance arrangements that

reflect both local realities and processes, and exported ‘scripts’ that in some cases are alien to the local culture. The focus of the IC on some high-profile statebuilding and stabilisation interventions has inevitably caused the policy debate to overtake – indeed, to ‘streak ahead’ of – academic research in this area. Access for academic research is already inevitably hampered by the lack of access to places and people characterised by FCASs but the fast pace of operations in the field, especially where the military is involved, has meant that academic research will need to catch up. The next section looks more closely at the context for international interventions in FCASs and the various approaches applied, where possible linking their discussion to the current academic debates.

2.5 Approaches and Frameworks for Intervention – Statebuilding Interventions and Stabilisation, Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

The main recent international statebuilding interventions in FCASs concern Bosnia, Timor Leste, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierre Leone, Liberia, DRC, Kosovo, Sudan and Somalia. There are lesser projects but these interventions have consumed the majority of resources and energy. Many of these interventions have been criticised for importing a ‘liberal peace’ model. The liberal peace model emerged at the end of the 1980s. It is suggested that the promotion of a liberal democracy along with a market economy will of itself create the conditions for lasting peace and economic growth in post-conflict countries. Richmond (2005, 2009), however, notes that the notion of the ‘liberal peace’ is far from coherent with a strong focus on political, social, and economic reforms, and on the long-term institutional processes that are linked to governance reforms at the expense of creating a meaningful peace in the short term. Consequently in his later work he argues that ‘liberal peace’ is undergoing a crisis of legitimacy at the level of the everyday in post-conflict environments, with a suggestion that it is, in the eyes of many host communities, ethically bankrupt. Professor William Easterly, in his book *White Man’s Burden*, succinctly argues that the world needs more than grand plans and good intentions:

The West has failed, and continues to fail, to enact its ill-formed, utopian aid plans because, like the colonialists of old, it assumes it knows what is best for everyone (Easterly, 2007).

Authors such as Roland Paris (1997, 2004) acknowledge many of the above issues raised by Richmond, Easterly and others such as Suhrke (2007, 2013) but maintains that, in any event,

the creation of institutions must still precede liberalisation as democratic reforms essential for good governance will not succeed in a state without strong institutions preceding this process. More recently, Paris (2010) has stated that there is a need to clarify and rebalance existing academic debates over the meaning, shortcomings and prospects of ‘liberal’ peacebuilding as the academic and policy debate has become too polarised. He concludes that the liberal peacebuilding model, despite all the recent criticism, deserves to be saved.

One critical theme around the liberal peacebuilding model is the problem of time. As succinctly noted by Hehir and Robinson (2007), a strong focus on good governance:

Telescopes state development, democratic development, and market development into simultaneous, or near simultaneous, processes. Historical experience seeks to indicate that this telescoping is novel.

They also note that these processes when applied at the same time may well be contradictory. Chandler (2006) argues that to develop theory and practice of statebuilding interventions “without politics” by a focus on developing institutions and good governance alone risks creating apolitical solutions to political problems and implies that good governance can somehow be created without building consensus.

Boege et al. (2009, pp.13–15) argue the West’s obsession with fragile and failing states as a failure of governance; consequently the fragile states discourse directs the traditional policy responses of the donors, seeking always to address governance and security issues. They believe this simply leads to expectations that the so-called fragile state can never meet. They argue that such a perception is an obstacle to peace and, rather, the focus should be thinking about, not ‘fragile states’, but the emergence of ‘hybrid political orders’. The latter appears to open up new avenues for discussing governance, security and conflict prevention.

The imposition of peace by substantial military intervention and political and economic sanctions has undoubtedly led to recreation of ‘the state’, such as was the case in Bosnia and Kosovo, but, according to Chandler (2006) society at large does not consider such a state to be legitimate, thus posing questions regarding the long-term viability of the intervention. The problem of exporting Western state models to the developing country context is also dealt with at some length by Clapham (2004). These problems include violent opposition to the exported Western ‘model’ by the Taliban in the case of Afghanistan, the lack of agreement amongst the IC (Suhrke, 2007, 2013), the misconceptions concerning state ‘failure’ that

assumes all states are constituted and function in the same way (Boas and Jennings, 2005), and the criticisms of the ‘Orthodox Failed States Narrative’ by authors such as Verhoeven (2009) and Call (2008). Further criticism includes such suggestions that the exported statebuilding and administrative model is unable to promote economic growth (Barbara, 2008) despite the claimed links between improved administration and economic development. Sedra (2012) has most recently added to the debate, knocking the model by stating:

A part of the prevailing mythology of state-building is that it is largely an apolitical, non-ideological, and technocratic enterprise. In reality, it is a deeply politicized and ideologically driven project, as much shaped by the interests of its donors as by the on-the-ground power dynamics of the recipient country. This lack of honesty, or perhaps this hubris, of today’s liberal state-builders has marred the project’s implementation (Sedra 2012, p.X).

Verkoren and Kamphuis (2013, p.501) suggest that the whole idea of statebuilding by exporting the Western democracy model is questionable and, with specific reference to Afghanistan, suggest that the statebuilding exercise there has been driven by huge quantities of aid that have effectively created a ‘rentier state’; a state which derives most, if not all, its national revenues from the rent of indigenous resources to external bodies. They boldly suggest that the resultant ‘aid rentierism’ limits the capacity for capacity building, will not necessarily lead to democracy, and may lead to formation of a state but it will not be a sustainable or stable one. Unfortunately, as with many such articles on Afghanistan, the authors simply draw on secondary resources, weakening their assertions, no matter how familiar the description may look.

The OECD has entered the statebuilding debate with significant enthusiasm and resources, making a prolific contribution to the policy debate (OECD 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2010, 2010a, 2010b). The OECD in its 2010 publication ‘Do No Harm’ has stated that it wishes to contribute to the debate on statebuilding by helping target assistance that supports ‘positive statebuilding dynamics’ (OECD 2010c). This implies that donors who engage in statebuilding must ‘do no harm’ in their enthusiasm for getting involved. The OECD suggests that the best way of ensuring that donors ‘do no harm’ is by developing a “sophisticated understanding of political processes, patterns of state society relations, and sources of legitimacy” (p.3). However, sweeping statements such as this make little contribution to overall understanding.

The UN, utilising international law, has taken responsibility for some governing functions where states are not able to fulfil the usual criteria mentioned above. Weak, fragile and failing states or states that are in post-conflict recovery sometimes have no other choice than to renounce *inter alia* their sovereignty, or temporarily transfer it. Fukuyama (2004) and Chandler (2006) note that this was the case for the situations in Kosovo and East Timor. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) the IC has exercised transitional control since 1995 and, at the time of writing, authority still remains largely under the control of the Office of the High Representative, nominated by the intergovernmental body responsible for implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement. A number of authors have questioned the role of the IC in terms of its legitimacy, the notion of state sovereignty and the resulting questionable status of BiH and Kosovo (Bellamy, 2009; Sebastian, 2010; Fawn and Richmond, 2009). These cases all emphasise one general dilemma of statebuilding interventions: the requirement for long-term engagement in a country with all the risks this poses for impacting on sovereignty. Paris and Sisk (2007) also emphasise this point as well as noting other dilemmas around local ownership, security and humanitarian concerns.

The US, most visibly active in statebuilding in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been characterised as pursuing a ‘liberal statebuilding model’ that seeks to build legitimacy for new states by providing security and essential services to its citizens (Lake 2010, p.257). Rathmell (2005, p.1020) on Iraq has drawn attention to the problems of defining intervention and intention, noting that, because the model of intervention in Iraq drew heavily on recent experience in Kosovo, the IC were drawn into the day-to-day policy and service delivery issues before even addressing questions of ‘how to’ reform and transition. Rathmell was referring to the experience, and baggage, that the IC brings to statebuilding exercises from previous experience. The complicated nature of statebuilding, and the importance of understanding what the interventions are for, is further alluded to in the comprehensive evaluation of DFID support to South Sudan post-2005 by PACT and LSE (2009). They conclude that a strong focus on a poorly defined notion of statebuilding meant that focus was lost from managing the persistent presence of conflict.

The IC are not the only actors involved in statebuilding. There are a number of stakeholders within the host nation, and outsiders, who all attempt to establish their own vision of what the state is and increasingly influence the outcomes in a way that results in an amalgam of Western-style state institutions and local context and solutions (Bliesmann de Guevara 2010;

Jones L. 2010). This naturally results in a unique and confusing mix of outcomes, where legitimacy is ultimately locally decided but constantly changing.

Statebuilding and Stabilisation

Stabilisation interventions are now inextricably tied in with the notion of statebuilding, although this is not a new concept. The post-WWII Marshall Plan of 1947 talked about political stability and recovery. For the UK, ‘stabilisation’ was a recurring theme in the discourse on military counterinsurgency campaigns such as the Malaya Emergency in 1951, and Northern Ireland in more recent times (JDP3-40, 2009). The recent popular use of the term ‘stabilisation’ in Afghanistan has its roots in the Bonn Agreement of 2001 on the provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions. The Agreement specifically mentions the need to ‘promote stability’ in Afghanistan following the apparent demise of the Taliban (Bonn Agreement, 2001).

Stabilisation is therefore a fairly new term in conflict management, peacebuilding and security, though it draws on both a military and civilian–military heritage. The first UK stabilisation guidance was produced in 2008. UK Stabilisation Unit (2008) suggests that it complements and draws on, rather than replaces, existing approaches to conflict, and it is used in violent situations where it is difficult or impossible to pursue conventional programmes. Its aims are explicitly political, to help establish and sustain a legitimate government. It often involves a degree of military coercion to reduce violence sufficiently to allow recovery, development and peacebuilding programmes. For the UK, the early defined objectives of stabilisation were:

- *Prevent – or contain – violent conflict.*
- *Protect people and key assets and institutions.*
- *Promote political processes which lead to greater stability.*
- *Prepare for longer-term development. Stabilisation activities can profoundly affect the chances of successful social and economic development (Stabilisation Unit 2008).*

The UK definition therefore has strong links to the statebuilding agenda (legitimacy, political settlement) with links to governance and development concerns. The UK’s JDP3-40 defines stabilisation as:

the process that supports states which are entering, enduring or emerging from conflict, in order to prevent or reduce violence; protect the population and key infrastructure; promote political processes and governance structures which lead to a

political settlement that institutionalises non-violent contests for power; and prepares for sustainable social and economic development (section 2.2)

JDP3-40 was published in 2009 and likely drew inspiration from the deteriorating security situations increasingly faced by the UK from around 2004 onwards. The conceptual link to Counter Insurgency Operations (COIN) which both the UK and US military (and coalition partners) were increasingly dragged into as the Taliban resurged in Afghanistan and as Shi and Sunni militias exploded out of control in Iraq. It is unsurprising, therefore, that revised COIN doctrine shapes significantly the military interpretation of what stabilisation is (JDP3-40 2010). Subsequently, many of the strategies employed in Stabilisation and COIN are closely related. The key underlying principles of counterinsurgency doctrine recognise the political and economic basis on which an insurgency attracts popular support, and therefore the requirement to focus the main effort in these areas. Herein lies the link to state legitimacy and authority – but it is not made explicit. The US doctrine set out in FM3-07 definition is:

Stability Operations constitute the Army's approach to the conduct of full spectrum operations in any environment across the spectrum of conflict. This doctrine focuses on achieving unity of effort through a comprehensive approach to stability operations, but remains consistent with, and supports the execution of, a broader 'whole-of-government' approach as defined by the United States Government (pp.vi-vii).

Thus the US approach is more an amalgam of activities that project total US presence, including force. This definition is more process-oriented, focused on ensuring that what the US Army does is coordinated with civilian effort – although, as research in the field demonstrates, this is not actually the case.

There are a number of other definitions for stabilisation such as that by Call and Couzens (2007), who define it more narrowly and understandably emphasise the links to US military approaches:

Actions undertaken by international actors to reach a termination of hostilities and consolidate peace, understood as the absence of armed conflict. The term...dominant in US policy, usually associated with military instruments, usually seen as having a shorter time horizon than peacebuilding and heavily associated with a post 9/11 counterterrorism agenda.

Similarly, Bensahel, Olikar and Peterson (2009) see stabilisation operations as one component in a suite of possible interventions and approaches, including reconstruction and COIN, as part of wider post-conflict operations that underpin statebuilding. For the EU the term is more of a strategic aim and is intimately linked to the concept of stabilisation and

accession. In the specific case of FCASs, the EU's 'Instrument for Stability' contributes to protecting democracy, law and order, the safety of individuals, human rights and fundamental freedoms up to 2014. From March 2014 a new regulation was passed establishing the Instrument Contributing to Stability and peace (EU, 2014). The instrument has multiple objectives reflecting the growing interest in preparing to respond to conflict and crisis, to prevent conflict where possible and to address regional and transglobal threat to peace.

From the above experiences of counterinsurgency and related military doctrine it is possible to discern that stability operations are set within in the broader context of FCASs with stability and statebuilding objectives as core conceptual links. However, there is little in the way of research evidence and academic analysis from the field that could deepen our knowledge and understanding of the linkages and interdependencies between stabilisation, stability activities and the whole statebuilding intervention. Stabilisation interventions in military doctrine and the policy discourse were partly brought to bear with the intention of winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local population. However, by 2011–12, a growing body of evidence (Fishstein and Wilder 2011; Fishtein, 2012) was emerging that suggested many of the underlying assumptions in a hearts and minds strategy were simply just that – assumptions. A Wilton park conference in 2010, attended by senior military and civilian personnel involved in the Afghanistan campaign, recognised that:

Research findings presented at the conference questioned many of the assumptions underpinning COIN stabilisation strategies, including that: key drivers of insecurity are poverty, unemployment and/or radical Islam; economic development and 'modernisation' are stabilising; aid projects 'win hearts and minds' and help legitimise the government; extending the reach of the central government leads to stabilisation and development projects are an effective means to extend this reach; and the international community and the Afghan government have shared objectives when it comes to promoting development, good governance and the rule of law (Wilton Park, 2010, p.1).

ODI HPG (2013) presenting evidence from the last 12 years of stabilisation interventions and attempted civilian–military dialogue, notes:

The belief that development and reconstruction activities are central to stability and security is by no means novel. It is also highly contentious, perhaps nowhere more so than in Afghanistan.

Some additional evidence on the use of the 'hearts and minds' approach in Afghanistan is provided by Beath et al. (2011), looking at the Afghanistan Government's National Solidarity Programme (NSP), the largest development intervention in Afghanistan by far and the

Government's flagship rural development programme. The Beath study did not find evidence of NSP reducing levels of violence in areas experiencing significant security problems, although the overall conclusion is that the benefits of the NSP "are not only limited to the provision of direct economic and social benefits, but can also contribute to preventing the spread of violent civil conflicts"(p.2-3). The UK Stabilisation Unit also admits that in the past they have struggled to monitor and evaluate stabilisation effectively. They note:

"Measuring activities and outputs is relatively straightforward, but we – like many of our international partners – have found it considerably more difficult to measure and to understand what the outcomes and impact of those activities have been and the extent to which they (individually or collectively) contribute to our overall objectives, or lead to unintended consequences" (UK Stabilisation Unit 2010, p.13).

Understanding of stabilisation is exacerbated by the lack of a reliable evidence base that stabilisation as an approach works and successfully addresses some of the key statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives it purports to support. The difficulty in assessing progress is referred to by Van Stolk et al. (2011), and also by Upshur, Roginski and Kilcullen (2012). The latter note the significant problems with the military's complex array of metrics. They go so far as to suggest it is 'junk arithmetic'.

Thus from the available, mainly grey literature, stabilisation is inextricably linked to the previous discussion on failed and fragile states and statebuilding but also to:

- Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention;
- Early Recovery; and
- The Comprehensive Approach

The following sections look at these three areas in turn.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

Peacebuilding has a history as long as the human race. Whenever there has been war and conflict, some people have sought to build peace. The term 'peacebuilding' was first introduced by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN Secretary-General, in the 'Agenda for Peace'. Peacebuilding today is linked to, and is an intimate part of, conflict prevention, civilian and military peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, peace agreements, reconciliation, reconstruction, institution-building, and political as well as socioeconomic transformation. UN peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations are the usual international military

platform on which stabilisation is now mounted. These were originally not understood as integrated and complex operations involving military, development and diplomatic actors. In recognition of this gap, UN Integrated Mission Guidelines were promulgated in 2006 (United Nations, 2006).

The concern of the IC with post-conflict peacebuilding and statebuilding is also demonstrated by the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) at the United Nations (UN) 2005 World Review Summit. The PBC and PBF are designed to assist countries emerging from conflict to better hold onto fragile peace and reconstruction gains. However, the most recent Report of the UN Secretary General (UNSG) on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict notes comprehensive and continuous failings of the IC in addressing the needs of peacebuilding (United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 2009a).

Llamazares (2005) has undertaken an extensive review of peacebuilding literature and suggests that there is now a growing common lexicon and methodological consensus on approaches and adherence to an increasingly standardised peacebuilding delivery package. The OECD definition of peacebuilding demonstrates further the wide-ranging, general nature of approaches:

“Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development”
(OECD, 2008d).

The OECD sees peacebuilding as an inclusive peace process to end armed conflict and create the basis for a sustainable political settlement. It promotes conflict resolution mechanisms and institutions to process conflict in a predictable, institutionalised and non-violent way and to address the causes and structural conditions of conflict (e.g. grievances, exclusion, poor governance) and its effects, such as feelings of injustice and vengeance that can lead to a recurrence in conflict. The links between peacebuilding and statebuilding at the policy level are demonstrated amply by the OECD publications on the findings of seven wide-ranging country consultations that were carried out as part of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (‘the Dialogue’) between November 2009 and March 2010. The consultations attempted to generate a consensus around fundamental peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities. Whilst the Dialogue recognised that different countries pose a variety

of peacebuilding and statebuilding scenarios, they also note an emerging consensus around a set of common peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities that national and international partners should consider in their work in Fragile and Conflict Affected contexts. Goals included, *inter alia*, the development of effective and accountable government institutions to facilitate service delivery. Armstrong and Chura Beaver (2010) note:

“one common theme has emerged in these operations: a fundamental, normative goal of transforming a state and society in ways that promote sustainable peace, good governance, and economic prosperity. An expanding body of literature addresses distinct, but related, research in peace-building and conflict transformation”(p.2).

Both DFID (2009) and OECD (2011) have attempted to consolidate the links between statebuilding and peacebuilding in the last two years. Through analysis of the OECD/DFID approach, one can discern the following objectives:

- Better understand the dynamics of fragility, the sources of state legitimacy and the political aspects of state–society relations;
- Work with both formal and informal actors to foster ownership of the development process and help the state increase its legitimacy;
- Recognise and manage trade-offs between and within peacebuilding and statebuilding;
- Balance top-down approaches with bottom-up statebuilding;
- Ensure we do no harm;
- Strengthen key state functions; and
- Prioritise and sequence interventions.

Early Recovery (ER)

The UN has picked up on the growing enthusiasm for stabilisation as a theme and linked it into its expressed aim of bridging the gap between humanitarian interventions and longer-term development by identifying the middle ground as the time for ‘Early Recovery’, the programme content of which is inextricably linked to an agreed understanding of post-conflict needs (United Nations 2005). This picked up on early UN and World Bank work on joint assessments such as the Sudan Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), prepared as a contribution to implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan. Indeed, the concept of stabilisation has been an extremely helpful rallying point for bringing together the UN family in a way that was difficult prior to 2005. In 2005 the UN reorganised itself around

‘clusters’, one of which was Early Recovery, as a response to criticisms, mainly concerning coordination and accountability.

Stabilisation overlaps with ER as the latter also has political and security dimensions as well as development objectives. This link has been made intentionally by the UN, and it is noted in the published guidance on ER and Post Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA), (UN, 2006a; UN and World Bank, 2007; UNDP, 2008). The UN-WB PCNA collaborative approach tries to get all parties to buy into an agreed analysis and strategy. This is predicated on a belief that it is best to engage the military, political, humanitarian and development actors into a seamless coherent whole because no single organisation or approach is capable of solving a complex conflict. PCNAs are therefore best considered as an ‘umbrella’ to bring together the UN system, the European Commission (EC), the World Bank (WB) and Regional Development Banks working together with host governments to conceptualise, negotiate, design and, most importantly, finance a common shared strategy for recovery and development in fragile, post-conflict settings. These are aspirational goals which the UN has recognised it does not yet meet (General Assembly Security Council, 2009a). Unfortunately, the PCNA methodology has inexplicably not been updated since 2007. However, the emphasis is clear: seeking greater collaboration and coordination are the aims.

The Comprehensive Approach (CA)

The theme of seeking ever greater collaboration is best exemplified in the CA. The sheer numbers of different governments and international, regional and local agencies involved, and the problems caused by the need to coordinate everyone, has partly given rise to what has been labelled the ‘comprehensive approach’. The relevance of a comprehensive approach to FCAS has been recognised up by the United Nations. An independent study carried out for the UN ECHA Core Group (DPKO and other core UN Agencies) in 2005 on the interface between peacekeeping, humanitarian and development work in the context of integrated missions found little evidence of what constitutes an integrated mission in practice, and no unified definition of the concept, nor set templates for how to achieve ‘integration’ (Eide et al., 2005). Since 2006 there is now a growing number of ‘Integrated UN Missions’ as a result of the perception that the classic UN peacekeeping and humanitarian responses have been insufficient to support a sustainable war-to-peace transition (UN, 2006a). Integration in this case is designed to streamline UN peace support processes and ensure that the objective of all UN forces and UN agencies are channelled towards one overarching goal – related to the so-

called ‘Delivering as One Agenda’ (UN, 2006b). However, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), in their ‘Capstone’ Doctrine, does not even mention, nor define, the term stabilisation nor demonstrate much enthusiasm for the CA. It does not address relationships between the mission and other multinational interventions in detail either. Indeed, it apologises in advance for the expected inevitable coordination failures:

The number of international and national actors involved in efforts to support the process of post-conflict recovery means that, in practice, planning cannot always be fully coherent or integrated. These actors have different roles, decision-making processes, deployment time-lines, procedures, budgetary pressures and supervising Authorities (United Nations 2008, p.55).

Wendling (2010) also draws attention to the emergence of different European Union Crisis and Emergency Management Structures.

The British Government, once it had committed itself to contributing to the post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, and under pressure from partners in other theatres, has moved towards working within a single vision, with proposed ‘unity of effort’ across departments and established the Stabilisation Unit, a tri-departmental entity bringing together the FCO, MoD and DFID. In 2010, the House of Commons Defence Committee noted:

Whilst there is no single Cross-Government policy on, or definition of, the Comprehensive Approach ... there are a number of publications that civilians and the military use to support joint working and effective planning in conflict environments. These have offered a balance of information and detail that avoids narrowing the scope of the Comprehensive Approach and thus becoming too prescriptive. The Government will review the adequacy of existing doctrine and guidance as the civilian and military stabilisation capacity develops (UK Defence Committee, 2010, p.3).

The US is similarly committed to the CA. An early example was in May 1994, when the Clinton administration issued Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 25: Administration Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations. This was followed by the President’s May 1997 PDD: ‘The Clinton Administration’s Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations’ (NSC 56). In 2004, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) became the focus of US State Department in formalised reconstruction and stabilisation (R&S) activities. The S/CRS was backed up by a new Presidential Directive

in 2005 on the Subject of ‘Management of Interagency Effort Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilisation’ (NSPD-44, 2005).²¹

Thus it appears that everyone, everywhere, is notionally committed to coordinating both within their own complicated institutional setting, including the US Government, UK Government, United Nations, NATO and the European Union as well as coordinating with each other in multi-country coalitions, joint country teams, joint funding mechanisms and various other ad hoc country donor coordination frameworks. However, some have questioned whether, organisationally and culturally, whole of government approaches are realistic (Baumann, 2008, pp70-73). The suggestion is that where humanitarian and military objectives collide there may be many difficulties in coordination (Friis and Jarmyr, 2008). Irwin (2012) reporting back from multiple tours in Afghanistan and writing for the US Strategic Studies Institute, echoing the Lindblom (1979) observations about wicked problems, notes that the US Government works in “disjointed ways through disjointed means”. He identifies a mismatch between strategy and agency resources:

*The U.S. Government’s systems for interagency integration are inadequate to the task. Specifically, existing interagency mechanisms are failing to coordinate and integrate U.S. Government resources and effort effectively—a major problem that stems primarily from the disjointedness of guidance and authority at the national strategic level...subsequently down to affect the theater-strategic, operational, and tactical levels of activity*²² (p.215).

In a damning critique he notes that Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in reality demonstrate disunity of effort. His criticisms echo the earlier comments of Jorgensen (2008) on the workings of PRTs in Afghanistan, where a whole of government approach by the Canadians, whilst seemingly attractive conceptually, is seriously compromised in the implementation.

The UK Government recognises it cannot coordinate everyone, everywhere, noting:

The more we integrate on one level (cross-government for instance) the more we risk ignoring anything outside our circle of integration. As an example International Organisations and NGOs cannot be integrated (were it to even to be practical) it is politically undesirable, they have their own mandates to fulfil) but their views and capabilities have to be considered (UK Stabilisation Unit 2010, p.10).

²¹ The above para refers to presidential Directives issued by the United States President’s Office

²² More of Irwin’s arguments are set out in Irwin’s ‘Filling Irregular Warfare’s Interagency Gaps’, *Parameters*, Vol. 39, No. 3, Autumn 2009, pp.65–80.

Whole of government approaches, therefore, pose massive logistical, cultural, organisational and legal challenges that do not appear to have been sufficiently thought through. Civilian and military coordination and capacity issues have been raised consistently as a potential obstacle to progress in interventions in conflict-affected countries. Interestingly, the fashion for promoting whole of government approaches makes an appearance in the ‘Kabul Conference Communiqué’ of 2010 where the Government of Afghanistan optimistically suggests its new approach will be a whole of government one (Kabul Conference, 2010). But then the Kabul Communiqué was largely written by the IC on behalf of the Afghan Government.

There are few examples of really close IC cooperation. In South Sudan six countries took a joint approach to programming and support for pooled funding mechanisms. However, an evaluation undertaken in 2009, sponsored by NORAD, revealed significant problems including a confused mandate, a lack of common policy frameworks and no agreement on “post-bilateral” programmes (Bennett et al., 2009). Recent evidence from the OECD (2011) on ‘Monitoring the Fragile States Principles’ in 13 states notes very low levels of joint analysis, joint planning and joint missions. In the US case Irwin (2012, p.217) notes the problem is not a lack of guidance – it’s just that “no one is in charge”.

Coordination amongst differing ‘types’ of organisations is also problematic. International NGOs such as ICRC and MSF fiercely guard their independence. Indeed, on at least one element, the links to humanitarian action, there is growing disquiet and ambivalence towards the stabilisation agenda from those in the humanitarian community who feel that ‘stabilisation’ approaches have not delivered and they may be tainted by the lack of success (Collinson et al. 2010). Oxfam, in its submission to the UK Strategic Defence Review (2010), states clearly:

The value of NGOs rests on the independence and impartiality they need to operate safely and effectively. Humanitarian NGOs and UK forces should share appropriate information, but maintain a clear separation of their roles (p.4).

Timing of interventions has also raised some problems, with some authors like Dobbins (2007) maintaining that peace dividends are most likely to be reaped in the year following the end of conflict. Noticeable and swift improvements in the lives of the local population can

create a virtuous cycle of optimism, increased investment and improvement. Dobbins (2007) notes:

The weeks immediately following the arrival of foreign peacekeepers tend to be a time of maximum possibility. The appearance of an intervening force often produces a combination of shock and relief among the local population. Resistance is unorganized, spoilers unsure of their future.

Dobbins then suggests that the reverse is also true: if the boat is missed, the gap can be filled by spoilers, illicit power structures, increasing violence and disillusionment with the peace process as citizens see little change. Henderson (2005, p.10) notes that the coalition in Iraq was successful in stabilising the Iraqi economy and implementing small-scale reconstruction projects that targeted urgent community needs:

Yet momentum dissipates unless short-term measures are supported by long-term development programs. The coalition might have sustained its momentum had it immediately begun work on long-term projects to rebuild major infrastructure, restructure state-owned enterprises, create sustainable jobs, and promote private sector growth. But long-term development projects were not an initial coalition priority.

Unfortunately the difference in views is amply demonstrated by Stewart (2006) on Iraq:

The CPA in the Green Zone wanted to build the new state in a single frenzy. Instead of beginning with security and basic needs and attempting the more complex things later, we implemented simultaneously programs on human rights, the free market, feminism, federalism, and constitutional reform. We acted as though there could be no tensions between the different programs, no necessity to think about sequencing or timing.

The above quotes illustrate the plentiful tensions at the heart of the timing and sequencing issues with which a stabilisation approach struggles to come to terms with. Despite the caveat noted above, it is posited that there are significant opportunities to improve administration and service delivery post-conflict, especially where in the pre-war situation they were absent or inequitably distributed. However, Henderson also notes that in Iraq little preparation or contingency funding existed to deal with the inevitable vacuum in public administration, and breakdowns in security.

Conclusions

There is universal agreement that the growth of fragile states poses significant threats to international security and has enticed the IC into taking action to ‘stabilise’ states that are beset by conflicts. The explosion in policy guidance and international focus on a small number of high-profile interventions starting with Bosnia and Kosovo through to Afghanistan

and Iraq has generated much in the way of publications concerning concepts, approaches, requirements, experiences and reports on projects by external observers, returning practitioners, and international organisations. Unfortunately the very nature of conflict environments limits access to academic researchers and there remains a lack of conceptual clarity in the fragile state-stabilisation literature.

It is evident that military force rarely solves confrontation sustainably; this is achieved by other means, usually a political agreement which always has links to government, administration, and access to power and resources. This is the essence of the stabilisation approach and the interface with fragile state research. Stabilisation ultimately aims to re-establish the authority and legitimacy of the government. Unfortunately, statebuilding is an endogenous process that takes many years; legitimacy, authority, representativeness and capacity each require lengthy attention. The evidence suggests that without it being driven through a strong domestic agenda there is unlikely to be the necessary legitimacy and accountability to make it a success. This point is forcefully made by Suhrke on Afghanistan (2013, p.283).

The stabilisation approach is essentially short term in nature and it assumes and specifies unity of effort and a whole of government approach, extremely difficult to achieve in practice. Where force has been required to establish stability and rebuild law and order, and security, it has not been clear how it should continue to be applied to enable the recipient state to recover, re-establish or build its administration and ultimately address the root causes of instability. The literature demonstrates consensus on the requirement for an integrated approach to stabilisation but leaves a number of gaps in the detail:

- A clear difference in emphasis in a number of the stabilisation definitions – sometimes overtly military operations, sometimes a collection of loosely related activities; for others a strategic aim or ‘end state’.
- Gaps between what doctrine and strategy say and what happens in practice.
- Gaps between civilian and military understandings of what stabilisation is and a growing reluctance for parts of the civilian effort to underpin the military stabilisation effort, most notably from NGOs.

- A suggestion that stabilisation is a supply-led intervention, when statebuilding and development experience suggests that a demand-led exogenous process is the only way.
- All the stabilisation literature emphasises that the intention is to establish integrated approaches and operations including unity of assessment, effort, and aim along with copious guidance, but these are undermined by deficiencies in leadership, strategic direction and agreement on the 'how to'.
- Difficulties in linking stabilisation to peacebuilding and ultimately conflict prevention.
- Little discussion regarding the role of the host country in understanding and managing the stabilisation and statebuilding interventions.
- Significant gaps in understanding the risks associated with stabilisation operations, ultimately, and perhaps inevitably; poor design of stabilisation interventions.

In summary, while there is an emerging body of evidence around good practice and guidelines about stabilisation operations, there is little in the way of theoretical underpinnings, and we know very little about the linkages and relationships between the various lines of activities pursued by the various stakeholders in a complex conflict-affected situation. By way of confirmation, Fitzgerald and Blair (2010, p.25) conclude with regard to the evidence from the stabilisation literature, there is:

Clear evidence of a paucity in evidence based literature in the areas of interlinkages across actors and activities in operationalising whole of government approaches. This is acutely evidenced at the policy level in the UK across the departmental white papers where stabilisation is mentioned as a tool of national power, yet it does not receive headlines in any of the policies individually or in the National Security Strategy. Furthermore there is a lack of solid empirical evidence highlighting the impact of unintended consequences and the implications for the military contribution to stabilization operations. Such evidence demonstrating outcomes, and positive or negative impacts is required to inform priorities and sequencing.

The picture is one of complexities, difficulties with diagnostics and understanding context, lack of cooperation in the IC, lack of coherent strategies, unrealistic expectations and resource constraints. Misunderstanding the long-term processes of state formation and thus having unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved in a post-conflict situation is a problem that can have multiple unintended outcomes, as will be demonstrated in chapter 4. In sections 2.2 to 2.5 the literature reviewed describes a picture of high complexity, at times

even chaos, as the IC grapples with the multiple tasks of institution-building and providing human security, basic social services, and justice. Using wicked problems as a lens or a tool to examine this further has some merit.

2.6 Wicked Problems and Complexity

The concept of wicked problems was first developed by Webber and Rittel (1973) in a now-famous paper entitled ‘Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning’ that elaborated on the problems faced by those working in the field of urban and regional planning. They challenged the whole institutional and academic edifice of rational planning and project management. They noted:

The search for scientific bases for confronting problems of social policy is bound to fail, because of the nature of these problems. They are ‘wicked’ problems, whereas science has developed to deal with ‘tame’ problems. Policy problems cannot be definitively described. Moreover, in a pluralistic society there is nothing like the undisputable public good; there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false; and it makes no sense to talk about ‘optimal solutions’ to social problems unless severe qualifications are imposed first. Even worse, there are no ‘solutions’ in the sense of definitive and objective answers (p.155).

Webber and Rittel addressed the inadequacies of old-style technical engineering approaches to problem-solving. Concurrently, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), researching a US federal programme for social and economic improvement in disadvantaged suburbs, showed that there were huge barriers to effective implementation due to the complex design of the programme with multiple goals, multiple agents and stakeholders. Wildavsky goes as far as to suggest that the obsession with believing that ‘planning’ is rational and can be controlled leads to disappointment. His paper, now also a classic text, notes provocatively, “If Planning is Everything, Maybe it is Nothing” (1973). These papers pursued a set of common themes around a critique of ‘rational planning’ that they assume is based on pro-market or anti-statist ideologies²³; that the information needs of comprehensive planning are impossibly large; that implementation of complex programmes requiring high coordination is inherently chaotic or unmanageable; and that achieving ‘rational agreed solutions’ is impossible given the inherent uncertainty, and subjectivity involved. These papers still underpin much of the accepted ‘theory’ in modern planning and the criticism of the ‘comprehensive planning approach’.

²³ They were writing in the context of the USA.

Surprisingly, whilst the concept of wicked problems has been around for 40 years and has been applied to a number of disciplines, it has not been looked at in depth in the context of an FCAS, even though FCASs seem to meet the criteria to be defined as a wicked problem. One attempt has been undertaken by Roberts (2001), looking at Afghanistan. Roberts looked only at the experience of organising the main workshop to illicit contributions to the first ever multi-stakeholder Strategic Plan for Afghanistan and concluded that this task alone warranted the moniker of a ‘wicked problem’.

In the area of PSM, the theme of wicked problems has experienced a resurgence of interest in recent years from authors such as Head and Alford (2008) and Grint (2008, 2010). Essentially they reprise the idea that social problems have no real solution as there are no value-free, true–false answers to any of the wicked problems with which governments must deal. There is no single ‘best answer’ possible for wicked problems because there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social and political problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false. It therefore makes little sense to talk about ‘optimal solutions’ unless severe qualifications are imposed first.

Webber and Rittel (1973) listed ten characteristics of wicked problems:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no ‘stopping rule’, i.e. no definitive solution.
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every (attempted) solution to a wicked problem is a ‘one-shot operation’; the results cannot be readily undone, and there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways.

10. The planner has no 'right to be wrong', i.e. there is no public tolerance of experiments that fail²⁴.

Conklin (2005, p.5) looking closer at social complexity, suggested that when people encounter a wicked problem they try to first understand the problem but then immediately jump to formulating potential solutions. However, because there is no right or wrong answer, the situation just gets a little bit better, worse, good enough or not good enough. Conklin (p.19) draws attention to the powerful fragmenting forces of wicked problems, the social and technical complexity, and the ensuing confusion, chaos, and blame created by failing to distinguish these forces. In a later 2006 paper Conklin usefully collapsed Webber and Rittel's original ten categories into six categories allowing a simpler description of a particular problem or set of problems. These are:

1. You will not understand the problem until you have developed a solution.
2. Wicked problems have a 'no stopping' rule.
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not right or wrong.
4. Every wicked problem is essentially unique and novel.
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one-shot operation'.
6. Wicked problems have no given alternative solutions.

In a further attempt to understand the basics of wicked problems and reduce Webber and Rittel's ten points even further, Alford and Head (2008) propose that there are two key features, complexity and diversity:

complexity refers to the difficulties in acquiring knowledge of the wicked problem and of potential solutions. These difficulties arise from a patchy knowledge base; complex inter-dependencies of processes and structures; uncertainties arising from the contingent and dynamic nature of social issues and processes; and the incommensurability of many of the risks and potential trade-offs ... the second dimension is diversity, which refers to the number and variety of actors involved.

Alford and Head (2008, p.3) also note the limitations of rational planning as it seemingly assumes that goals are clear, and that one has adequate information and simply choosing the right method will lead to the achievement of those goals. In the complex world of FCASs it is unlikely that such clarity exists; indeed, institutional complexity and uncertainty, the

²⁴ This list appears in numerous citations including Alford and Head (2008, pp.4–5).

unpredictable nature of a protracted conflict, the presence of spoilers and multiple competing interests, including in the IC, suggest this is a set of most intractable problems.

Since Webber and Rittel’s paper was published, many disciplines have picked up on the typology of problems as a way to explain the intractable nature of some problems. They include Mishra and Koehler (2007) in education, Innes and Booher (1999) in urban and regional planning, Tatham and Houghton (2011) in humanitarian planning and logistics, and multiple applications in natural resources and environmental planning. However, recognising the problem might be wicked only takes you so far. Solutions to dealing with wicked problems have therefore attracted more recent attention than simply identifying an issue as wicked. Lindblom (1979) posits that administrators in organisations faced with these types of problems simply “muddle through” their work and primarily adopt a strategy of “disjointed incrementalism” in order to make progress. A more commonly observation is that failure to recognise wicked problems partly explains the continued use of familiar but useless approaches to solving those problems (Conklin, 2005).

One issue with Webber and Rittel’s initial work was that they suggested, controversially, it is not possible to plan rationally, as the more effort expended the less it helps. This idea was echoed by Wildavsky in his seminal 1973 paper, ‘If Planning is Everything Maybe it is Nothing’. This seems to contradict some of the evidence presented earlier in this chapter with regard to international interventions in FCASs which suggest failure is simply a result of not understanding the context . The wicked problems literature therefore suggests the reason for problems being difficult to solve is not simply to do with context and more surveys. The solutions, therefore, cannot be as simple as gathering facts. Alford and Head (2008) go further in their analysis and suggest that the defining characteristic of wicked problems is the degree of ‘uncertainty’ associated with them which makes dealing with them so difficult. They go on to elaborate that such uncertainty can be categorised into the “substantive, strategic and institutional”. An intepretation of their views is presented graphically at table 2.3; the third column of wehich simply offers some of the likely equivalent issues around FCASs:

UNCERTAINTY		
	In General	FCAS
Substantive	Gaps in knowledge,	Extreme lack of basic data

	No agreement on the problem definition	for making decisions due to the protracted conflict. Intractable political problems, ever changing
Strategic	Numbers of actors involved with different strategic perspectives, differing mandates, lack of strategic agreement, divergent objectives, lack of trust	Multinational coalitions, sometimes fractured, dominated by certain 'partners', unclear motives, stakeholders react swiftly and unpredictably to domestic agendas
Institutional	Organisation and institutional differences, incompatible decision-making systems, budgets, cultures	Vastly different administrative procedures, multiplicity of organisations with limited interoperability, competitive nature of institutional environment, substantial presence of corruption

Table 2.3 Uncertainty, Wicked Problems and FCASs (after Alford and Head 2008)

This analysis suggests that reducing the uncertainty and breaking down the complexity may help with making progress on dealing with the wicked problems. Alford and Head (2008), quoting research by the Australian Public Service Commission (2007) on tackling wicked problems and public policy, summarised those areas where current attempts have been made to deal with uncertainty, complexity and disagreements. The list is as follows:

- Holistic thinking.
- Collaborative working.
- Innovation and flexibility.
- Engaging stakeholders.
- Developing new skills in the public service (communications, blue-sky thinking, influencing).
- A better understanding of behavioural change.
- Tolerating uncertainty.
- A comprehensive approach.

However, Alford and Head still fall back onto ever greater collaboration as the answer to tackling the degree of complexity involved. This is unsurprising at it was written at a time when the whole of government approach (to everything) was very much in vogue. As noted previously, however, the 'whole of government approach' itself has delivered little in the way of demonstrable progress. In sum, the weakest area of the concept of wicked problems is in the means to deal with the problem itself.

There is a suggestion, therefore, that the IC could be mistakenly embracing the Whole of Government Approach (WGA) or ‘model’ that is severely limited by its own inherent complexity, to the extent that there may well be no ‘optimal’ solution to the problem, no matter how much coordination is brought to bear. Christensen and Lagreid (2007, p.1062), looking at the experience of whole of government working in Western countries, ask:

Has WG resulted in more capacity to act for political and administrative leaders and more collaboration and integration among public organisations? There is no specific body of studies or hard evidence to make broad-based conclusion about these questions.

In the case of FCASs the complexity issue embraces the nature of the problem to be tackled, the conflict and the fragile state itself, and the means or tools to tackle it, a multinational, cross-functional, multidimensional integrated approach. The obsessive attention to ‘planning’ adopted by military authorities partly reflects the apparent impression that if resources are applied, project management and hard work, along with a good dose of high-quality leadership, anything can be achieved. This is the precise point made by Webber and Rittel criticising the all-encompassing multifaceted land use planning models that emerged out of 1960s planning. When faced with wicked problems such as that posed by Afghanistan, like old-time city administrators, the military fall back onto tried and trusted methods of command and control. However, international interventions in conflict situations typically involve individual nations and organisations within complex international coalitions in which those individual nations may strive for supremacy, may have different goals, or may simply act in ways that make the delivery of technical assistance difficult to achieve. At the level of an individual country, the OECD (2006, p.11) has demonstrated through a number of case studies that institutional, budgetary and functional walls between departments can impede cooperation and coordination in attempting whole of government approaches in fragile states.

Complexity Theory

At this point the notion of complexity theory appears particularly pertinent; it is difficult to disconnect the study of organisations and the theory of wicked problems from the notion of complexity. Daft (1992) captures the complexity across three dimensions; vertical, horizontal and spatial (in terms of geographic locations) with multiple activities and sub systems across organisations. Complexity and the links to wicked problems have been known to town planners and public administrators since the 1960s. Byrne’s work (1998) on social science

and complexity theory looks specifically at urban planning theory and deindustrialisation. Complexity conceptually is patently difficult to grasp; the evolution and management of cities are the clearest example of that as noted by Byrne (p.140). Hall (1980) suggests that the great planning disasters of the 1960s and 1970s were as a result of application of simple system based rationalist 'scientific' thought principles based around narrowly defined professional ideologies that paid little attention to consultation, knowledge of underlying context and a belief that planning was about control. In recent years the demise of former great cities such as Detroit perhaps best demonstrates our inability to grasp the complex (Binelli, 2013).

More recent papers have looked at the complexity of public and private sector networks and their links to wicked problems and the problems caused for collaborative working (Weber & Khademian, 2008). Slaughter (2005) takes the complexity to the highest order with, what she sees as the emergence of a New World Order where the existing notion of the state is challenged and states are disaggregated into ever more complex and often separate systems that require innovative thinking in making global governance work. She draws attention to the complex global web that is emerging, becoming ever more complicated. Looking across to the recent level of interest in the complexities of statebuilding and peacebuilding a pattern of complexity is emerging.

Social scientists tend to look for order hidden in the chaos before them, seeking to understand apparently complex phenomena. The popularity of complexity theory has led some authors such as Lewin (1992) to suggest it can explain any complex phenomena from mass extinctions to complex organisational structures. However, complexity itself is by definition a 'wicked problem' and defies explanation. Manson (2001, p.405) notes that despite the attraction of complexity theory for its proponents, the actual practice of complexity theory is anything but simple in that there is no single identifiable complexity theory. Rather "...any definition of complexity is beholden to the perspective brought to bear upon it". In summary, the area of complexity theory that this thesis is interested in can help aid understanding of the apparent illogical behaviour of humans. It challenges the notion that things are fixed and can be predicted, emphasising that no one person or organisation can control the system. As Tosey (2002, p.5) notes "...this departs from the dominant discourse in which the only alternative to an individual being "in control" is thought to be anarchy' (Stacey et al 2000 p.124). Tosey emphasises Stacey's point by suggesting that the logical extension of the lack

of control in systems is that external agents can only guide and facilitate. This sits in stark contrast to military interventions with their focus on plans, and command and control. As hard as administrators try to control the system, the system adapts and can hide its hidden inner complexities beyond the understanding of the most skilled professionals. That problems are complex was noted in a recent frank admission by the Chief Economist of the IMF commenting on the impacts of the 2008 (and ongoing) financial crisis. He suggests that crisis has taught us to pay attention to the “dark corners” where the economy can malfunction badly, “The main lesson of the crisis is that we were much closer to those dark corners than we thought—and the corners were even darker than we had thought too.” (Blanchard, 2014, p.1)

In response to the complexity of the issues in FCASs, the importance of context, and the need to not seek perfection, Grindle (2011, p.415) notes that a new theme has emerged in the area of good governance: an understanding that a one-size fit does not exist, that idealised end states are not helpful, and that practitioners are moving more towards situation-specific responses where an understanding of the context is everything. But Grindle rightly notes that whilst this approach is growing in favour amongst academics and real world practitioners, the approaches to undertaking the analytics and developing the right conceptual frameworks are untested. Grindle notes:

We need greater insight into the pathways through which new recommendations are generated. Put simply, we are faced with a serious real world problem but we do not understand how the required analysis can and ought to be done to help us identify the right response in a given situation. This is vitally needed as the reform agenda burden on FCAS is so great that without clear priorities any progress is at risk (p.417)

A further challenge identified by Grindle (2011, p.417) is that of whether progress on understanding the analytics “can be appropriated into or derived from theories and concepts that have scholarly appeal”.

The review of wicked problems demonstrates that in FCAS the complexity of interactions and actors, systems, levels of uncertainty, and divergence of values and viewpoints hinder the understanding of the problems and potential solutions. Solutions to wicked problems, however, only really focus on increasing collaboration and understanding. Undoubtedly wicked problems need a variety of collaborative approaches to help solve them; but the particular nature of FCASs may hinder the growth of specific forms of collaboration.

2.7 Overall Synthesis and Conclusions

The overarching theme that emerges from the literature review is that whilst effective, efficient and stable states with good enough administrations are central to development for all countries, whether they are affected by fragility and conflict or not, the broad range of concepts and contexts militate against a full understanding of what works and why in specific situations.

There is some evidence available for what works in both developed and developing countries, but little for FCASs. In an FCAS, and in a stabilisation context where a military campaign may be underway, the situation is understandably more difficult to comprehend. The literature review revealed that there is no shortage of authors with views on why states fail, or why specific reforms fail, but there is a gap in the body of knowledge concerning the specific reasons why PAR/CSAR may fail in an FCAS context. This is despite the undoubtedly important and necessary contribution of this reform to stabilisation, statebuilding objectives and overall aid effectiveness and impact. It follows that it is not clear from the literature which approach or approaches to civil service and administrative reforms can deliver the progress required in an FCAS. The literature is also highly compartmentalised. In part this is a natural reflection of the lack of crossover between different social science disciplines, the civil–military divide, the progressive distancing of the humanitarian actors from the military, and the nature of research programmes in FCASs.

From this literature review it has, however, been possible to discern the growing convergence of the concepts of peacebuilding, statebuilding, security and development in fragile states. However, it is not obvious that the convergence has of itself translated into more effective approaches to post-war stabilisation and recovery, including the need to ‘fast track’ priority basic state capacity. There are a number of concepts and many disparate case studies that relate to discrete areas of stabilisation operations – peace and conflict studies, security and international relations, public administration, development, anthropology, military doctrine, human rights and more, but there is very little scholarly attention given to consideration of the interrelations between the various lines of inquiry. Consequently, when considering how civil service and administrative reform, as part of an overall governance strategy, can be supportive to stability operations, or indeed whether it is necessary to support stabilisation in an FCAS, there is little evidence to go on.

Examination of the policy discourse in particular shows worrying signs of a ‘roundabout’ system of referencing with little recourse to actual evidence. The World Bank quotes OECD, the OECD quotes the World Bank, the DFID quotes the OECD, the OECD quotes DFID, and so on.

Further, other conclusions of the literature review are summarised in seven broad areas:

- Models of public administration occupy different disciplinary systems.
- There is a lack of rigorous empirical studies and academic research.
- There is ambiguity as to what exactly is ‘good governance’.
- Existing models of statebuilding and public administration are inappropriately and often thoughtlessly applied to conflict-affected situations.
- There is a persistent gap between the International Community’s aspirations for statebuilding and stabilisation and their achievements on the ground.
- There is a problem of prioritisation, sequencing and measuring.
- The wicked problems approach is a useful lens to understand the extreme problems of ensuring a sufficient measure of donor coordination and interoperability in an FCAS environment.

Models of public administration occupy different disciplinary systems and are rooted in a ‘social values’ view of the world

Public Sector Management (PSM) is essentially a problem-solving activity and methods adopted are rooted in their respective cultural contexts. Public administration experts and practitioners are a product of their disciplinary training and professional socialisation. They may be influenced by their different systems: a French bureaucrat undoubtedly thinks differently from an American administrator and their administrative boundaries and methods differ. Social identity theory and theories around cultural relativism suggest strongly that if your ‘social values’ are different then it is likely that public sector management responses will be different (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Public administration and management is fragmented; this is amply illustrated in the debate about NPM and whether it is new, useful or even compatible with promoting the nebulous concept of what is regarded as ‘public sector values’. The world views of aid workers are also closely tied to values; certain home-grown basic values remain with those who come to work in FCASs. In an FCAS, where PSM is

supported by technical advisers from a multitude of different countries, it is even more difficult to find the right answers to ill-defined questions and objectives. Administration is rooted in political science and political questions. It follows that the theory of public administration is just that, theory. The value of these theories is assessed by authors based on their own beliefs and values, and what they hold as truths. Variable progress on NPM in a variety of situations demonstrates that it is clearly not universally applicable. On the other hand, in public administration one might go so far as to suggest that ‘anything goes’, as suggested by Feyerebend (1975), if it appears likely to offer a solution to the problem of the day. Advance and change in public administration thought is rooted as much in views on politics, religion or culture as it might be based on rational thought and science.

The lack of rigorous empirical studies and academic research and ‘junk arithmetic’

The literature review demonstrates a lack of rigorous empirical studies in the area of CSAR in FCAS, but also in the area of stabilisation. The limited amount of research into CSAR in FCASs has led to a preponderance of policy discourse in the so-called ‘grey literature’, which in turn is what influences policymakers most. The problem of the lack of analytical work and published academic research can be illustrated by reference to a recent OECD/DAC literature review on the benefits of using country public finance management (PFM) systems as part of a broader PAR support programme (OECD and Mokoro 2010). Of the 119 references listed, only one article cited was from a published peer-reviewed journal. The majority of the references cited are evaluation reports, policy papers, working papers, monographs, practice papers/notes, IFI guidance etc. This is symptomatic of the problem faced by both academics and practitioners in working on PAR in an FCAS. Nearly all interventions in a post-conflict situation are field-based and ‘hands-on’, There are a limited number of relevant published research articles in peer-reviewed journals, partly due to the difficulty in conducting primary research in a conflict-affected situation but also probably because academic wheels move much slower than the field operations.

PAR and CSR in conflict-affected and/or fragile states is therefore based on little original empirical research into what works and why in specific situations. Neither do the few assessments on what is working or why make reference back to the theory of public administration. Public administration reform has been the recipient of very large investments of financial and human resources in FCAS but little is known about the impact of such

interventions and the activities and interlinkages across stakeholders and activities in the wider statebuilding and stabilisation endeavour.

There is little evidence of how politics and interests may shape the relationship between PAR, the host governments, development agencies and outside military interventions to support the stabilisation and ‘transition’ strategies designed specifically to stabilise and transform the state. Understanding of stabilisation is exacerbated by the lack of a reliable evidence base that stabilisation as an approach works and successfully addresses some of the key statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives it purports to support.

The ambiguity around what exactly is good governance

The literature review has uncovered the ambiguity around the concept of good governance and the slippery nature of actually measuring it, even in countries with plentiful data. The review also indicates that in recent times the explosion of interest in governance has somewhat eclipsed the interest in public administration reform in FCASs as a measure of strengthening administration, government and institutions, and achieving stability. There is a strong suggestion that there is much progress to be made in understanding the concept and meaning of governance before it is possible to understand how it is measured. If it is accepted that CSAR, as a key subset of public sector institutional reforms, is a crucial component of good governance, and the literature assumes that good governance fundamentally underpins a ‘stable state’, then the implications are that interventions in FCASs like Afghanistan may target governance issues without really defining what is intended or how it will be achieved, and with little idea of knowing whether progress is being made.

Existing models of statebuilding and public administration are inappropriately and often thoughtlessly applied to conflict-affected situations

The literature review indicated the current negative views on the status of the liberal peacebuilding model. There are also frequent references to inappropriate public administration models applied through external interventions without appropriate analysis as to their applicability or impact. This is the case in more benign development settings as well as in fragile states. Traditional models of public administration, including NPM, have proven problematic even in developed countries and developing countries that are not ‘fragile’, where CSAR has had very mixed results at best.

The World Bank notes the attraction and reliance of the IC on a ‘best practices’ approach, stating:

There are interests in creating ‘best practices’ for ‘selling’ them. An entire industry has developed around the packaging and transmission of ‘New Public Management’ ideas to developing countries, even though there is evidence that the ideas were not implemented consistently in many ‘successful’ OECD and Middle Income Countries, and that ‘effective’ reforms tends to refer to the situation that countries enjoy after crises have passed, not what they used to get through them (World Bank, 2012, p.6).

Rubin (2006, p 184) notes “studies of state-building operations often try to identify ‘best practices’ without asking for whom they are best”. Indeed, the literature suggests the approach to the building of states and their system of public administration is heavily influenced by western ideas about good government. The ideology of reconstruction and reform is heavily influenced by European and US perceptions of the role of the state, with links back to the liberal peace model. This results inevitably in what Andrews (2013, p.2) refers to as the “square peg reforms in the round hole government”.

The PAR literature characterises reforms as failing, with general concepts such as ‘poor leadership’ or a ‘lack of political will’, but this fails to provide any substantive points on which to build new reform efforts. Partly as a result of this, the supply of Western models of public administration is unsurprising, as there is a suggestion that the model is okay just as long as you understand the local politics. Public administration in Western countries has developed over very long periods of time and the impetus for political change and public service development has been rooted in societies themselves, often as a result of major societal shifts. From the review of literature there is not even agreement on what constitutes a ‘fragile state’ and the ‘extent of fragility’ in a given situation. Furthermore, if every context, every challenge or every fragile state is different, then how can the case studies be synthesised to draw comparisons across interventions or indeed be used to generate new theories of change?

There are serious limits to institutional reform generally in development settings and likely more so in an FCAS

The literature confirms the difficulty in implementing institutional reforms in developing countries despite the perceived wisdom that it is essential to address development issues. Problems include process similarities, ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions, that result from a specific agenda for action (as noted above); ‘identikit’ legal frameworks; formal approaches to change; short-term interventions; and limited understanding of context. Change appears to

happen because governments start to look more like governments with offices, computers, highly paid staff and so on, but very little change occurs at the core. Andrews (2013) reference to the isomorphic mimicry at play asserts that the emphasis on institutional development merely creates the facade of an organisation and instead diverts it from focusing on become more efficient. As Pritchett and de Weijer (2010, p.2) note:

It is much easier to create an organisation that looks like a police force—with all the de jure forms, organisational charts, ranks, uniforms, buildings, weapons—than it is to create an organisation with the de facto function of enforcing the law.

In any event, and as pointed out by Thomas (2009, p.2), the poorest countries simply do not have the resources to build weaker versions of Western governments:

Their attempt to do so spreads government too thin, making it impossible for the government to deliver on its commitments and making both law and government policy declarations aspirational.

Piling ever increasing donor resources into the equation in an attempt to speed things up is counterproductive. In some cases, like Afghanistan, other governance indicators, such as the incidence of corruption, increase markedly with increasing donor investments.

A persistent gap between the International Community's aspirations for statebuilding and stabilisation and their achievements on the ground

The literature demonstrates that there is a consistent and considerable gap between what appears to be agreed in terms of understanding, analysis and underlying principles, and therefore 'what ought to be done', and what happens in practice. There is a misunderstanding concerning the time it takes to build effective institutions, economic recovery and other processes which historically have proved to be very long processes. In a Europe beset by conflict, Weber (1919) noted:

Expert officialdom, based on the division of labor, has emerged in a gradual development of half a thousand years.

Pritchett et al. (2010) calculate how long it would take a number of developing countries to reach Singapore's measured level of capability, assuming an optimistic trajectory. For Afghanistan they suggest 834 years using the KKM index for Government Effectiveness (see Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2009). However, in conflict-affected situations, traditional models of support for institution-building and CSAR generally take too long to meet local citizens' expectations and are far too short to meet the pressing domestic agendas of the donor countries. One problem lies in a lack of concrete policy instruments, mechanisms and

commitment to translate the understanding into action. Whilst there has been some progress in coordination and agreement over approach (joint analyses, joint strategies/operations, policy coherence, leadership etc.) there continues to a misunderstanding or lack of recognition of the concept of real ownership of the issue by the host government. This has been amply demonstrated by OECD/DAC reports and numerous evaluations. Promoting ‘ownership’ feels right, but this concept obscures the problem of defining ownership by whom, and is recognised in some of the principal–agent theory. The academic literature does not provide much evidence of what ownership means in practice other than to suggest that if the IC takes over administrative ‘control’ as in Kosovo, Timor, Bosnia and Iraq then ultimately state sovereignty is compromised. The emerging academic literature suggests that the international efforts to build appropriate administrations might therefore best be described as having produced ‘ambiguous’ results; the very divisions, competition and disunity of authority within the IC ultimately constitute just as big an obstacle to creating the ‘legitimate’ state as the internal contradictions, tribalism and ongoing conflict within the host nation.

The problem of prioritisation and sequencing

Despite the need to develop host state capacity and a strong competent civil service, to prioritise, organise, and decide policies on security, governance, economic development etc., and then deliver, evidence suggests that the key priorities for action are not being identified by either government or the IC. Most conflict-affected states do not have PAR strategies, although in benign settings most countries are preparing such strategies. Both the IC and the host government appear unsure at times as to what is more or less important and what is feasible in a sensible timescale. There are no specific academic references that address the issue of timing and sequencing other than to say it will take ‘a considerable amount of time’ and that ‘premature load-bearing’ and unrealistic expectations are unhelpful.

Whilst there is great interest in the complexities of prioritising and sequencing reforms in FCASs, particularly in areas such as humanitarian aid and relief, security, administration, governance and democratisation, economic reforms, service delivery and infrastructure, and secondly in identifying and prioritising the types of instruments available for financing and delivering these interventions, evidence is thin.

Wicked problems offer a useful lens through which to examine the complex problems associated with PSM and its links to statebuilding and stabilisation

Even in the Western world of public administration, the public sector is suggested as being full of ‘wicked problems’. Furthermore, two of the purported responses to wicked problems, those of greater coordination and increased knowledge of what the challenge is, in turn emphasise the importance of also addressing, in an integrated fashion, complex development, security and diplomatic priorities. Integration, coordination and whole of government approaches are the dominant themes in the academic and policy literature. It is noted that agencies come together at different spatial levels, from the capitals in the US and Europe focusing on politics and foreign affairs, to the national offices and field offices at the ‘coal face’, all face different realities: what Schlichte and Veit (2007) have called ‘coupled arenas’ that are in fact characterised by misunderstandings, competition, and misinformation. Many projects commence without regard to the activities of others or the relationship between one donor’s quick wins and another’s contributions to structural reform.

The engagement of multiple donors often threatens the coherence and consistency which effective development of public administration requires. With weak or absent government leadership, ‘sovereign’ donors can and do resist coordination by others. In a high-profile environment, the desire to report on inputs and outputs (e.g. so many people hired, so much training delivered) can overshadow a focus on outcomes. However, donor coordination is more than usually important in a stabilisation environment, in order to avoid duplication, ensure coherence and avoid over-burdening the government with differing project management requirements, as noted by DFID (2010).

The literature indicates that there is little in the way of effective planning that brings the IC together as a coherent whole. Both the literature and policy advice and guidance persistently indicates a lack of coordination. There simply is very little empirical evidence available on the ‘how to’ of integration and cooperation and, in any event, the very concepts are value-laden. For example, it does not help to take as a starting point ‘unity of effort and purpose’ if this is ultimately not possible or even desired. Even if it were possible to design an outcome to which all organisational mandates could somehow be interpreted as contributing, the resulting goal would likely be vague. What the military sometimes calls ‘end state’ conditions can themselves be hopelessly value-laden. It is not clear what exactly ‘stable governance’, ‘social well-being’ or a ‘sustainable economy’ are, as set out in US military doctrine FM3-07.

The evidence for a theoretical model of what constitutes ‘good’ post-war stabilisation and peacebuilding is therefore proving slow to emerge on the ground, with seemingly little agreement on what constitutes ‘success’ in peacebuilding and stabilisation. Stabilisation literature is largely confined to the discourse on experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, though it is expanding and evolving in real time as new conceptual, policy and operational issues arise in other theatres such as Sudan, the Middle East and North Africa as a result of the ‘Arab Spring’. The recent discourse on statebuilding, with its strong links to fragile states, conflict and peace, has struggled to come to terms theoretically with the complicated outcomes of post-conflict societal processes. Wicked problems theory seems particularly pertinent here, with its emphasis on explaining why some problems cannot seem to be solved because of the large numbers of organisations involved with greatly varying opinions on the definition of the problem and many interventions based on incomplete knowledge,.

The literature review has suggested a number of questions that seem ripe for more definitive understanding and resolution. The next chapter looks at a number of research methods to enable exploration of the issues in the Afghanistan case study.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research philosophy, the research strategy and methodology, and the research instruments identified to address the questions and propositions outlined in chapter 1. The chapter title is ‘research methodology’, but the distinction between method and methodology is acknowledged. Method is understood to be tools for data collection and analysis. Methodology refers in this case to the underlying research approach. The methodology in turn influences the choice of methods (Gray, 2004, p.16). The chapter is organised into seven sections. Section 3.2 describes the research philosophy. Section 3.3 describes the approach to the research. Section 3.4 outlines in some detail the research design. Section 3.5 most importantly draws the reader’s attention to some specific issues regarding research in Afghanistan and the unusual field conditions that can give rise to problematic ethical issues and the possibility of personal bias. In section 3.6 the phasing for implementation of the research is explained. The chapter summary is at section 3.7. Information on the ‘process’ of research is provided to ensure it is possible to judge the quality of the research and the rationale for choosing particular methods and approaches. At all times the researcher has focused on identifying the approach and methods that optimise the chances of obtaining systematic, valid and reliable data in the context of both the research question and Afghanistan.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a belief concerning the ways in which data about a phenomenon can be collected, analysed and interpreted. Epistemology and ontology drive our understanding of the nature of research itself; understanding the difference is crucial for a researcher. Choices about which research method to adopt are rooted in epistemological and ontological positions, and the understanding of human nature and being, and what constitutes knowledge. Epistemology seeks to understand the basis on which human knowledge stands, According to Gray (2004), it tries to understand ‘what it means to know’. Epistemology is also concerned with the question of *how* knowledge is acquired. In the case of this research, this raises questions about the ability or *ways* of acquiring knowledge that will help in dealing with the complex world of failing states. Ontology is more a study of ‘what might exist’ or the nature

of existence itself. Ontology in this research case might be construed as an explicit specification of the conceptualisation of Civil Service and Administrative Reform (CSAR) based on the various perspectives of the stakeholders. Out of these philosophical viewpoints there is a key distinction between two main research philosophies in the Western tradition of science research. These are:

- The positivist approach, and
- Interpretivism (also known as anti-positivism).

Two other main research philosophies are acknowledged but not considered further at this stage. They are critical theory and postmodernism. However, both positivist and interpretivist approaches at first sight seem to offer advantages for this type of research. Indeed, through history both approaches have had keen adherents. Famous positivists include John Stuart Mill, David Hume, Rene Descartes and August Comte. Interpretivists include Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz.

3.2.1 Positivism

Positivism is a natural sciences epistemology; even so, Bryman and Bell (2007, pp.16–17) suggest that it would be a mistake to treat positivism as synonymous with only science and the scientific. Authors such as Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) and Hughes (1980) characterise positivism as rooted in beliefs that the world is external and objective and can really only be measured by objective hypothesis testing. It is thus rooted in empirical work and logic. Positivists argue that phenomena should be isolated and that observations ought to be replicable. Thus Easterby-Smith et al (2002, p.28) note that a positivist research philosophy contends that the:

“Social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively, through sensations, reflection or intuition”.

Yu (2004), however, states that positivism has been misunderstood in terms of its perceived links to a solely quantitative approach and this misunderstanding has been reinforced by the tendency to think of distinctive comparisons between quantitative (numeric data, questionnaires, structured interviews) and qualitative (data from observation, reflection and unstructured interviews).

The modern ‘rational scientific’ approach is not without its critics; in particular, as a practitioner this researcher, whose field is imbued with politics, vested interests, multiple stakeholders, social values and religion, feels there is a serious problem with accessing the truth as to what is going on, and strict adherence to a positivist approach appears particularly limiting. Likewise the ‘rational and comprehensive approach’ to planning has over the last 40 years or so been shown to have serious limitations in its treatment of social issues in particular. The very nature of ‘wicked’ problems, as outlined in the literature review, suggest that a much more exploratory approach would be more fruitful, especially in terms of ultimately identifying how problems might be solved and dealt with. Choices about research methods ought not to take place in the abstract. The nature of ‘reality’ in FCAS is inconclusive. The very engagement of foreign countries (including the military) in those states, and the substantial sums of money at stake, create a demand for data that can justify the continued presence of those organisations, their performance and their results. Organisations like the International Finance Institutions produce a multitude of analytical reports that purport to be based on strong quantitative research, and are in fact often highly questionable. As this research project has proceeded it has become increasingly evident that a ‘large’ proportion of data generated in FCASs is open to question: poorly collected and collated, often restricted in availability, manipulated for highly political ends, and uncontested due to the lack of access for those researchers that might question the data itself. As a consequence this researcher has erred strongly towards caution in the use of quantitative methods where available data is poor.

3.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is the contrasting approach to positivism and emphasises the difference in the subject matter at hand. Positivism is mainly rooted in the natural sciences with interpretivism focused on studying people and their institutions. Bryman and Bell (2007, p.731) note, “Qualitative approaches usually emphasize words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data”. However, Bryman and Burgess (1999), note that many writers have been critical of an approach that describes qualitative research as simply an approach marked by an absence of numbers, suggesting that adopting a solely quantitative approach denies the possibility of uncovering a full and rich understanding of what is observed. However, the tendency to think of qualitative approaches as being more appropriate to the social sciences persists, as noted by Myers (1997, p.8):

Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena ... qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena.

The latter point above does not suggest that qualitative research remains restricted to the social sciences. An interpretivist position asserts that reality can only be revealed and understood through subjective interpretation. This requires the researcher to understand the subjective nature of social action through the study of phenomena in the natural environment. In particular the ‘phenomenological approach’ rooted in the early writings of German Philosopher Alfred Schutz claims to be able to better represent social reality because it recognises that the world is subjective and socially constructed by the people that inhabit it (Schutz, 1967). This makes eminent sense to this researcher. Humans act and react the way they do due to their interactions with one another; the nexus of officials representing the host country Afghanistan and the officials representing the IC offer a complex array of daily interactions and endless negotiations. By observing the behaviour, views and interactions of people (these subjects) it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the world and people’s experiences and actions. The phenomenological approach is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, Smith (1998) suggests that the phenomenological approach can help dig deep into the assumptions prevalent in the social world. In this way, there can be better understanding of the meaning attributed by persons to the activities in which they engage, in order to understand their behaviour (Wilson, 2002).

The key issue with the phenomenological approach is the notion, expressed above, that it is by nature subjective in that the researcher is immersed in the interactions with his/her subject matter in the complicated real world of social interaction. This goes against the traditional assumption in science research that the researcher has to be independent from the subject matter. The research design and analysis has to recognise this effect at all stages of the research to maintain objectivity as far as possible; one way to do this has been to use newly emerging software to aid the process of learning about what the data collected is saying.

Bazeley and Jackson (2013, p.2) note:

The efficiencies afforded by software release some of the time used to simply ‘manage’ data and allow an increased focus on ways of examining the meaning of what is recorded.

Bearing in mind the above, the researcher empathises with Feyerabend’s (1975) more democratic solution to advancing theory. He suggests “anything goes”, advocating

methodological pluralism, and that contributors should be given more or less "equal opportunity" to contribute. This researcher believes it is impossible to simply attach the study of public administration solely to science or a scientific approach.

3.2.3 Deduction versus Induction?

Collis and Hussey (1997, p.8) describe deductive research as:

a study in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed which is then tested by empirical observation.

Collis and Hussey describe inductive research, as, "a study in which theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality". Bryman and Bell (2002, p.14) describe this distinction further:

Some researchers prefer an approach to the relationship between theory and research that is primarily deductive. With an inductive approach theory is the outcome of research. In other words the process of induction involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observation. To put it crudely, whereas deduction entails a process in which:

Theory → observations/findings,

With induction the connection is reversed:

Observation/findings → theory.

Sinkovics and Alfodi (2012, p.817) emphasise that:

The business and management community increasingly recognises that qualitative research is a 'messy', non-linear and often unpredictable undertaking. Yet, a considerable proportion of the qualitative research published in top journals is still presented as the result of a linear, predictable research process, thus wrongly suggesting deductive reasoning.

Research in a complex, 'messy' setting such as FCASs, with all the suggestions that they offer a classic case of wicked problems, implies that the researcher will have to progressively focus on the emerging issues that matter as research proceeds. This iterative approach to case study work is emphasised also by Yin (2009). This suggests that pretending that an approach is entirely deductive, linear and predictable in order to demonstrate rationality, rigour and a systematic approach would be wrong.

Inductive reasoning is something humans do every day. Humans care about what is 'probable' given the evidence before them, however scant the evidence. In making these inferences from the evidence humans rely on underlying belief systems and pet theories. Induction therefore has to be tempered and the pitfalls of using inductive reasoning have to

be clearly understood. With regard to this research it is suggested that many actions taken by the IC in places like Afghanistan are based on a paucity of evidence and rooted in Western belief systems that do not resonate with Afghans.

As with the distinction regarding the qualitative versus quantitative debate described above, it is not always helpful to think in binary terms, as in reality many studies do use a mix of both approaches. On the view of the relationship between theory and research, therefore, this research adopts the middle ground between deduction and induction. In the complicated situation of Afghanistan, and with so little academic research work in evidence, this research undoubtedly has to be more iterative in nature. The research, due in part to its complexity, weaves back and forth between theory and data. This researcher therefore adopts a 'pragmatic' approach to research design. Collis and Hussey (2002, p.66) describe pragmatism as a valid approach, used by many experienced researchers who recognise the constraints imposed by a single paradigm. Kuhn (1996) believed that it was impossible to carry out research unless one had a stock of beliefs and theories in tow. Without them it would not know what questions to ask or where to start. Thus the researcher feels justified in mixing methods according to the research question. The emphasis is, however, clearly on an interpretive inductive approach with its focus on recording people's experiences, trying to capture the direct experiences of the context of Afghanistan. The researcher is leaning towards an exploratory interpretative approach, seeking out patterns and ideas that emerge from analysis of the data.

The desk review and the case study interviews will both use inductive logic, identifying both what is reported and assessed, and will seek and analyse the opinions and subjective histories and interpretations of study participants. The desk review and analysis of the interviews are interwoven to produce unique perspectives rooted in Afghan reality. It is acknowledged, though, that subjectivism in terms of interpretation still exists. In the desk review of documents, especially documents drafted on the basis of political positions; they are drafted to protect or defend persons and their work/beliefs/commercial position; or they are evidently polemical, with much faith placed in the judgment of the researcher.

3.3 Research Approach

Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) note that in reality much research does adopt a mixed methodological approach. Recent experience demonstrates that in FCASs, due to the difficulty in gathering statistical data, doubts about its reliability and the complicated array of interrelated challenges, ongoing conflict and swiftly changing contexts, solely relying on mainly quantitative data is problematic (Druckman, 2005; Smyth and Robinson, 2001).

This type of research approach will provide a better understanding of social and cultural phenomena concerned with public administration in the context of a complex conflict situation. Thus a qualitative approach is the preferred dominant approach with a focus on observation and close participant engagement, interviews and questionnaires, documents and analysis of relevant reports by many different organisations. Maxwell (2005, pp.22–24) identifies a number of instances where the qualitative approach is most suitable:

- Where one needs to understand the meaning of events, situations, experiences and actions;
- Understanding the particular context within which the participants act and the influence context has on their actions;
- Identifying unidentified phenomena and influences;
- Understanding the process by which events take place; and
- Developing causal explanations.

The data sought will thus be both quantitative (where available), qualitative, and complementary. The qualitative data will attempt to answer the ‘why and how’ questions and will provide the context for the quantitative data – the ‘what’ and the ‘how much’.

Quantitative data is usually gathered through survey questionnaires and existing databases or by generating data from documents and studies. Qualitative data is usually gathered through interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation. The research uses both methods with a strong bias towards qualitative data. The mixed research approach is growing in adherents, especially in management research. Mangan et al. (2004) note:

The trend in management research generally is increasingly to use methods and approaches which provide a middle ground between the contrasting positivist and phenomenological paradigms and perspectives. Methodological triangulation, using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, increasingly provides multidimensional insights into many management research problems.

Mixed research approaches are also regularly applied in healthcare research design (Sale et al., 2002) and some authors such as Kaplan and Duchon (1988) recommend a combination of research methods in order to improve the quality of research.

Based on the research philosophy covered so far and the nature of the questions posed in Chapter 1, this researcher will employ an interpretivist epistemological approach, and an approach which assumes all research methods are valuable and relevant, though they must be appropriately managed.

3.4 Research Design Alternatives

Research design is the process of identifying the potential different frameworks for the collection and analysis of the data (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.39). Research design is therefore defined as the “detailed plan for conducting a research study” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.340).

A number of authors such as Hussey and Hussey (1997), Collis and Hussey (2009) and Miles and Huberman (1994) have suggested an array of possible approaches. Most common in scientific studies in the natural sciences is the experiment, but this is much less used in management research and especially organisational research. An operations research approach is focused on the application of scientific principles to business management, providing a quantitative basis for problem-solving and complex decision-making. In the positivist methodology the most common method of research is the use of surveys, where typically large volumes of data are collected and manipulated.

Research design options associated with interpretivism are numerous and can be summarised briefly as:

- Ethnography – derived from anthropology and with a focus on participant observation. This is essentially writing about people and their cultures and observed patterns of activity.
- Action Research – often referred to as participative action research, this is an applied research strategy that seeks to find effective ways of bringing about change in a partly controlled environment (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.81).

- Participative Inquiry – where the subjects of research are intensely involved in the study including, sometimes, in the design, survey and analysis itself. This approach is driven by practical outcomes more than theoretical understanding (Reason and Rowan 1981).
- Case Study Approach – where a single or multiple case study approach seeks to understand social phenomena in a particular setting (Yin 2009).

Ethnographic Approaches

There are a great deal of descriptions of what ethnography is but they all emphasise the extended engagement of the researcher in the social life and work of those in the study (Agar, 1996, Holland and Leander, 2004). Ethnography emphasises detailed observational evidence. It was decided not to adopt an ethnographic approach as the method implies a very long stay in the field, and intense participant involvement in order to understand fully the participant's realities. Access to the real lives of civil servants, their organisations, day-to-day work in the field, and their interactions with the rest of social reality is simply unrealistic in an ongoing conflict situation such as Afghanistan.

Action Research

Because of the nature of the issue under discussion, an appropriate research approach could be 'action research' in that it applies to most intractable 'real world' problems (Hult and Lennung, 1980). Action research, sometimes called practitioner research, implies the research will have real use in everyday life and will have implications that relate to situations other than the one under study. It is also claimed that theory generated from action research is 'grounded in action' (Eden and Huxham, 1996). Like many real world problems it is therefore messy and any analysis necessarily crosses a number of disciplines. Action research has begun, from its early beginnings with Lewin (1947), to have an influence within organisational development, management and psychology fields. It appears to be particularly popular in the field of education research. This research considered a number of approaches to action research as it, *inter alia*, can provide a method to help explain why things work (or why they do not work). Action research can help not just to describe, to understand and explain but seek to change things. It requires the researcher/practitioner to immerse himself into the situation and be flexible to change and adaptation as new insights and new data are

uncovered. It also allows the subjects under research to change, collaborate and ultimately help to identify and solve problems (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

Action research is, however, risky generally and could be very risky in the Afghanistan situation. There is a risk that the relationship is skewed towards the subject matter at the expense of the researcher. Action research assumes a great deal of collaboration between the researcher and the subject matter and for the full cycle to take place there ought to be a period of action planning, taking action, learning and evaluating. In the Afghanistan case study there is not a single problem capable of limitation, or an easily defined representative client: everyone and every organisation has their own 'position'. Nevertheless elements of an action research approach are relevant, in particular the focus on the importance of the practical outcomes of the research. Does it work and does it help our understanding of the problem?

Therefore, because of the research problem outlined in Chapter 1, this research chose to adopt a case study approach; however, it is worth examining in a little more detail the reasons why 'case study' was chosen.

Adoption of the Case Study Approach

This research makes use of a single case study approach. Whilst the case study approach is only one of the many methods in social science research, it is deemed particularly appropriate for this research in Afghanistan. Yin (2009, p.2) notes that a case-based study is likely to be preferred when:

(a) 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context.

Civil service and administrative reform in Afghanistan satisfies all of these criteria. Yin (2009, pp.47–48) goes on to suggest that a single case study, as opposed to a multi-case design, can be justified in certain circumstances, as follows:

1. The single case represents the critical case in representing a well-formulated theory. In the case of Afghanistan it is anticipated that the single case study can make a significant contribution to understanding the theory in public administration and knowledge building as it applies in conflict-affected situations.

2. It is an extreme or unique case – Afghanistan satisfies this rationale in the sense that it is an extreme case of statebuilding in an ongoing conflict with seemingly little progress apparent.
3. A single case may alternatively be ‘typical’ or ‘representative’ – in some ways Afghanistan is typical of many recent foreign interventions in a conflict, with extremely high levels of international aid and a high-profile ‘stabilisation’ intervention.
4. A single case study may be a ‘revelatory’ case in the sense that the case reveals understanding in a way that was previously inaccessible. This research will certainly explore some areas previously not investigated.
5. Lastly, a single case study could be justified as part of a longitudinal study, examining events at two points in time. Though that is not proposed in this research, it could be added later.

Case studies are best used where ‘context is everything’ and the case study approach is particularly adept at catching the complexity of a particular situation. Stake (1995, p.xi) notes that:

A case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.

Despite the widespread use of the case study in the social sciences, there is criticism concerning its limitations and especially a single case study. Gerring (2007, p.6) notes that:

A work that focuses its attention on a single example of a broader phenomenon is apt to be described as a ‘mere’ case study, and is often identified with loosely framed and non-generalizable theories, biased case selection, informal and undisciplined research designs, weak empirical leverage (too many variables and too few cases), subjective conclusions, non-replicability, and causal determinism.

Despite the criticism above and the risks attached to a single case study approach, Gerring also points to the paradox that most of what is known of the empirical world has been generated by case studies. Criticism, therefore, is more likely related to the fact that the case study methodology is poorly understood and often poorly applied. The inference for this researcher is that extreme care has to be taken with ensuring the conceptual framework for analysis is robust and the tools and techniques for analysis are appropriate and rigorously applied. In line with recommendations of Hussey and Hussey (1997), the researcher examined a number of possible other case studies including South Sudan, Palestine and Bosnia-Herzegovina before deciding on the Afghanistan case study. The critical factors for

deciding on Afghanistan were the perceived commitment of the likely interviewees, the intense and current international interest in the case of Afghanistan, and the privileged access of the researcher to documentation and high-level personnel through elite interviews²⁵ over an extended period of time. The researcher has been working intermittently, though frequently, in Afghanistan since 1996 and has worked at all levels of government in a number of key ministries on civil service and administrative reform issues.

In summary, following single case study research requires the researcher to:

- Source material intelligently, ensuring bias and key omissions are avoided.
- Minimise the chances of misrepresentation.
- Maximise access to key materials and interlocutors.

3.4.2 Selection of the Case Study Organisations

The preliminary analysis and literature review established that the principal organisations under review ought to be the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). This is because they were the most relevant to the issues that the research is most interested in (Hussey and Hussey, 1997, p.67). Secondly, discussions with senior officials in these organisations revealed their willingness to participate and an early recognition that the research findings would be of use to them. Both these organisations are the principal ministries engaged in civil service and administrative reform in Afghanistan²⁶ and the researcher has worked with many of the senior officials throughout the study period (2002–12). The researcher was also able to draw on copious amounts of field notes, correspondence, internal reports, and meeting notes in these organisations. Officials also participated in identifying key questions for research and scoped the problems identified in preliminary focus group discussions.

3.4.3 Data Collection

Yin (2009, p.126) notes that analysing case study evidence is especially difficult as the techniques for doing so are still not yet well defined. He recommends that every case study

²⁵ Elite interviews are defined as interviews with high-level personnel carrying out key public roles (e.g. ambassador, senior military officer, government minister or deputy minister).

²⁶ The MoF has become more engaged in recent times with support from the World Bank.

should prepare a general analytical strategy that defines priorities for what to analyse and why. In this situation where there is no recommended fixed formula for analysis, a general approach was initially identified, a principal first task being to design a ‘framework for analysis’, discussed in Section 3.4.4 below.

Principles of Data Collection

Yin (2009) suggests that a researcher can greatly increase the chances of maximising the return from the evidence gathered by following three principles:

1. Use of multiple sources of evidence.
2. Create a case study database.
3. Maintain a chain of evidence.

Maintaining quality control is therefore an overriding objective of the researcher linked to collection methods that are transparent, rigorous, explicit and meticulously recorded.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher uses a wide variety of data collection methods. Maxwell (2005, p.79) notes that:

The ‘data’ in a qualitative study can include virtually anything that you see, hear, or that is otherwise communicated to you while conducting the study; there is no such thing as ‘inadmissible’ evidence in trying to understand the issues or situations you are studying.

Saunders et al. (2000) note a variety of data collection methods, secondary data, observation, interviews and questionnaires. Yin (2009) identifies six sources of evidence most commonly used in case studies including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. It may be that other sources of evidence emerge in the course of gathering data. This researcher utilised multiple sources of evidence, with a main focus on:

- Primary Documentation Sources – analysis of key documents.
- Semi-Structured Individual Interviews – from the case study organisations and other third parties.
- Expert Focus Group Discussions – with invited stakeholders representing the broad array of interests in Afghanistan relevant to the research question.
- Observation.
- Field Journal and Memos.

The research is designed around using the detailed case study to collect, present and discuss data as fairly, intelligently and comprehensively as possible. The above list is elaborated upon below.

Primary Documentation Sources

This research primarily looks at the workings of governments, therefore government documents are important and relevant primary sources. Primary sources in government documents include, but are not limited to: laws and regulations, treaties, international commitments and agreements, strategic implementation frameworks and background research, parliamentary proceedings, records of government budgets and plans, statistical data, investigations and reports by government commissions, and many other similar documents and reports that touch on the work of the government and the international bodies it is closely engaged with. Many of these documents are published and in the public domain. For the purpose of this analysis documents produced by the main international bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and its member states are also included²⁷. The analysis of the majority of these documents is contained in Chapters 4 and 5.

The documentation review also covered analysis of corporate publications, websites, newspaper reports and clippings as appropriate. Analysis used categorisation of various studies, putting information into chronological order, identifying the frequency of key events, and seeking patterns emerging from the analysis. The research also utilised news items reported by the BBC Monitoring Service. These news items helped to supplement or corroborate other findings. The BBC Monitoring Service was created in 1939 to assess the use being made of radio by the Axis powers during WWII. It is uniquely capable of a deep focus on open sources. In the Afghanistan case study this includes a wide range of local broadcasts and news agency transmissions. For four years the research has had access to daily summaries of all local news and reporting (radio, satellite news, internet websites, local TV etc.). The reports provide the words as spoken and claim to be accurate and impartial

²⁷ Useful information on identifying primary sources was summarised from information taken from Yale University Library, accessed 18 August 2012 at http://www.yale.edu/collections_collaborative/primarysources/primarysources.html.

translations of what was said, what happened²⁸. The monitoring service has moved with the times and now also includes monitoring of satellite TV, the internet and social media. The latter monitoring of social media, when combined with new software to support qualitative data analysis, offers exciting possibilities to delve deep into social media platforms as a popular expression of local activism in conflict zones. The recent experiences in Syria and Egypt underline the major changes underway in the use of social media.

Documents produced by governments, either the Government of Afghanistan or foreign governments, are direct evidence of strategies, policies, approaches and activities. The analysis involved textual analysis to define key objectives, intentions, interactions, motivations and outcomes of civil service and administrative reform policies, programmes and projects. Textual analysis was undertaken to look at who was saying what, about what issue, and addressed to whom. The first phase of analysis mapped out the PAR frameworks and interventions for Afghanistan in order to establish a fair picture of the range of interventions into civil service and administrative reform over 2002–12. The intention is to clearly depict what the IC and the GIRoA were trying to do and why.

Analysis of programme and project reviews then attempted to reveal how successful these approaches were and what might be reasons for failures and success. It is recognised that full disclosure of issues and problems is not always present in these documents, so careful triangulation with interviews and other sources was made where possible. Although the desk review was intended to be rigorous and systematic, it cannot represent a full evaluation of the International Community's overall support to civil service and administrative reform in Afghanistan. There are simply too many documents in existence. Rather it was intended to sample carefully with the intention to use a firmly evidence-based approach to extract the principal lessons identified by documentation since 2002, especially as they relate to overall statebuilding and stabilisation objectives, and latterly 'transition' objectives. High level documents, agreements and those tracts that involved multiple stakeholders were focussed upon.

Some limitations have been noted, due in part to poor record-keeping and the lack of evaluations of many project interventions. Also due to the ongoing conflict, many military

²⁸ http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/about_us/index.htm accessed 13 May 2013.

strategies, policies and project assessments are confidential and access is restricted. As an example of this, a review of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Projects submitted for the record to the Ministry of Finance in June 2013 revealed that three projects with a total value nearing £20 million were classified “Project data withheld due to the sensitivity of the project”²⁹. For US Government projects it is not even possible to get such an admission on record.

Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

Targeted in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including political persons, senior civil servants and third parties working in the case study organisations were held. The principal focus was on interviews with those individuals connected with the following key Afghan institutions with responsibility for public administration: the IARCSC, IDLG and other ministries with major public administration reform programmes including significant capacity development initiatives. The use of detailed interviews is partly justified by the nature of the contacts established over a number of years by the researcher. The researcher has taken advantage of excellent contacts with all the agencies in the IC. The researcher has also taken advantage of an extended consulting network of colleagues who have been and continue to work in PAR projects in FCAS and particularly Afghanistan over many years.

Respondents therefore fell into four distinct groups:

- **Senior staff of government institutions and agencies** (IARCSC, IDLG and other key government officials). This group included officials up to deputy minister level, current and past.
- **Staff representing the principal development partners** including DFID, EU, USAID (the main donors to Afghanistan), as well as staff working in international multilateral organisations such as the UN and the World Bank.
- **Public administration reform consultants** working inside Afghan government, either currently or previously but with at least five years’ experience in the Afghan context.
- **Senior representatives of Afghan civil society.**

²⁹ Record of a private correspondence to the head of Aid Management Directorate, Ministry of Finance

The 25 interviews were based on an interview guide used to conduct and guide the interviews. Interviews were loosely structured, broadly following the list of questions in the guide. The interview questions were drafted following the initial identification of the preliminary conceptual framework for analysis that emerged out of exploratory focus group discussions. The questions were also influenced by the findings in the literature review (Chapter 2), and the proposed research design and analysis strategy (see Section 3.4.4 below). Information concerning the research was passed to participants in advance of the interview and is contained in Appendix A. The interview guide is attached at Appendix B. The basic interview guide was ‘piloted’ in five preliminary interviews. This resulted in some reordering and fine-tuning of questions, and some additional explanatory introductory text.

Transcripts were prepared immediately post-interview. A minimal amount of editing was required to clarify certain points. The transcript was then forwarded to the interviewee for his/her assent to use of the material. Some respondents took the opportunity to add further explanation to some of their comments. The interview ‘technique’ drew on many lessons identified in the Innovations for Successful Societies (ISS) programme³⁰. The oral history interview approach is utilised by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Bobst Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton University as part of the ISS. On this extensive research programme oral histories provide an opportunity for civil servants and other practitioners to chronicle their ‘on the ground’ experiences, learning from each other. The civil service ‘experience’ is a particular focus area of this programme. In the ISS project these interviews become the basis for case studies which are then used in research to help guide institution-building, steer the development of appropriate training and encourage reflection on important public sector management issues.

All interviews were conducted face to face in a relaxed and informal manner. The interviewer probed for additional information related to each question but did not steer the interviewee. The extended interviews are also complemented by informal feedback, notes made in meetings and multiple ‘frank’ email exchanges.

A number of general considerations were adopted in the interview design and administration. These included:

³⁰ <http://www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties/>.

- Purpose – clarity of the purpose of the interview and simplicity in questions to avoid confusion, and testing of questions with a small group of interviewees (pilot).
- Conduct of interviews – usually no longer than 90 minutes, with an invitation to continue to contribute to the study, and provide feedback at a later stage. The feedback was regarded as a particularly important part of the research to enable participants to agree that the findings accord with the interview, and provide an opportunity to elaborate on any particular issue.
- Local understanding – it is important that the interviewer understands both the conceptual and the cultural aspects of the interview process. The interviewer has to be attuned to local culture and local issues before fieldwork commences.
- ‘Progressive focusing’ – iterative improvements in the questionnaire as a result of consistent feedback.
- Ethics – taking note of any issues as they arose

The Use of Focus Group Discussions

The researcher also made use of Focus Group Discussions (FGD). These are organised discussions with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences with regard to the research question. FGDs were regarded as particularly useful in this case as it is extremely important to draw on respondents’ attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys (Gibbs, 1997). In many conflict situations these attitudes, feelings and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting, but are in some cases more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and the interaction which being in a focus group entails. Specifically, there are often a multitude of views and explanations of events. The everyday use of language and culture of particular groups is also of interest, especially when one wants to explore the degree of consensus on a given topic (Gibbs, 1997).

FGDs were used prior to preparing the conceptual framework for analysis and after the analysis of questionnaire data to help with validation of findings.

Observation

Observation is regarded as a complementary approach to that of collecting information through interviews. Maxwell (2005, p.94) notes that interviewing

Is often an efficient and valid way of understanding someone's perspective, observation can enable you to draw inferences about this perspective that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data.

Observation takes place both informally in the interview phase but also as part of the experience of the researcher in the respective workplaces of the case study organisations. More formally, observation takes place where the researcher is participating in formal senior management meetings, many of which are conducted in English³¹. Naturally, permission of those being observed has been sought. Collis and Hussey (2009) note that 'non-participant observation' is "where the researcher observes and records what people say or do without being involved".

Use of the Field Journal and 'Memos'

The researcher has kept a field journal for a considerable length of time and has used this journal to track key documents, conversations, incidental observations, newspaper reports and interviews, key quotes and miscellaneous other useful and corroborative notes. The field journal was drawn on at many stages in the research – to help with question formulation, analysis, triangulation and the final writing-up. It is not literally a 'journal' and comprises everything from media reports to email conversations, notes made for future reference, work notebooks and so on.

Research Facilitation Software

In this research project, the software NVIVO was utilised. A growing number of researchers are taking advantage of software for qualitative data analysis. NVIVO is developed and marketed by QSR International. Prior to both research design and the data analysis the researcher received online and one-to-one training from a specialist provider, focused specifically on the data generated. In addition the researcher attended specific NVIVO company-managed workshops on data analysis of a range of material such as documents, PDFs, audio, video, pictures, spreadsheets and web data as well as developing familiarity with the available text analysis tools.

³¹ Interestingly, management meetings are conducted sometimes solely in English, sometimes in Dari-Pashto and sometimes in a mix of both.

The choice of software was affected by a number of considerations but principally by the reputation of the software and its specific development to assist with qualitative and mixed methods research. There are positive reports of its efficacy (Schonfelder, 2011; Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012; O'Neill, 2013). All data in NVIVO is stored and managed digitally. The software can also handle multiple inputs including photos, social media, web pages, and bibliographic references such as the complete contents of the research literature review. NVIVO claims to be able to analyse data deeply using powerful search, query and visualisation tools. This research found it to be helpful in helping uncover subtle connections in the data, identifying the themes and concepts. The individual interviews and FGD transcripts were verbatim records and thus perfectly suited to the software.

Using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) is not a 'silver bullet' to solve all the challenging analysis problems with large volumes of interview data. It simply helps speed up the process. It is down to the researcher to ensure that data analysis is trustworthy, reliable, and consistent. The researcher still interprets the data. At all times the researcher has to provide insights and ideas as research progresses. QSR International, the software developer is careful to advise on its website that NVIVO *"doesn't do the thinking for you; it provides a workspace and tools to enable you to easily work through your information"*.

It is therefore only a tool but one that can assist greatly, by helping to organise and manage data and save time, and can also help justify findings. Naturally, as the use of CAQDAS has grown in recent years there are those who have doubts as to its efficacy, including those with an aversion to new technology. Bazeley and Jackson (2013, p.7) summarise the principal concerns around the impact of the use of computers on qualitative analysis as follows:

- *The concern that computers can distance researchers from their data.*
- *The dominance of code and retrieve methods to the exclusion of other analytic activities.*
- *The fear that the use of a computer will mechanise analysis, making it more akin to quantitative analysis or 'positivist' approaches; and*
- *The misperception that computers support only grounded theory methodology, or worse, create their own approach to analysis.*

However, they go on to demonstrate to the satisfaction of this researcher that all of these concerns can be addressed through the exercise of care in the analysis. In particular, in this

research the perspectives taken and conceptual framework developed have occurred apart from the software. Similarly, the coding, the identification of coding themes, the questions asked of the resulting data and the choice of tools for analysis are all within the purview and judgment of the researcher. Following use of the software the researcher can see clearly the particular issue of being necessarily close to the data and yet maintaining distance when needed. This is summarised nicely by Bazeley and Jackson (2013, p.7) who note:

Qualitative software was designed on the assumption that researchers needed both closeness and distance ... closeness for familiarity and appreciation of subtle differences, but distance for abstraction and synthesis, and the ability to switch between the two

Maintaining an ‘overall’ perspective on the interviews and other data was perhaps the biggest challenge in this research project.

3.4.4 Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: the Preferred Strategy

As stated in the introduction, the priority for the researcher is to attempt to identify ‘what is going on’. The process of research design essentially provides the framework for providing the evidence to answer the research question. It is thus represented by the preparation of a ‘conceptual framework’ for the research. This is set out below in Figure 3.1³². This was designed based on the following:

1. Utilising the ‘foregrounding’³³ described in Chapter 1.
2. The findings of the literature review in Chapter 2, through the preliminary synthesis of the academic and international policy discourse, and
3. Incorporating issues identified through a parallel initial scoping exercise in the early focus group discussions – a preliminary investigation into the initial range of issues likely to be raised in the specific case study of Afghanistan, where, as previously stated, ‘context is everything’. These FGDs delved deeper into the Afghanistan specifics and helped identify the issues likely to be faced by the researcher and the sorts of questions that ideally need to be in the questionnaire.

³² The framework draws partly on a World Bank PCN elaborated on in turn by ODI (2011) in a multiple case study of the effectiveness of PFM in conflict environments. This research approach adopted by the Bank and ODI is very relevant to Afghanistan and has been adapted and expanded on to refocus on the crucial areas of civil service and administrative reform.

³³ ‘Foregrounding’ is defined as the early questions and preliminary propositions that guide the information search for more specific and current research, and subsequently influence the research design framework.

4. Experience identified through similar but not identical research and experience in other FCASs.

Through the above it has been possible to extrapolate some key issues and themes. The preliminary framework depicts the myriad of possible relationships between the separate domains within the specific context of a Fragile and Conflict Affected State, as represented by the dotted line. The primary unit of analysis therefore is the nation state, in this case Afghanistan. The ‘foregrounding’ and the literature review suggested that the distinctive FCAS context will impact substantially on the approaches adopted by both the host government and the International Community, the type of reforms pursued, their achievements and the wider impact on and relationship to statebuilding, peacebuilding, transition and stabilisation.

The initial literature review has therefore helped to identify a framework that suggested PAR in an FCAS was subject to unique pressures associated with the specifics of that context – fragility and conflict. It is proposed that this framework can represent:

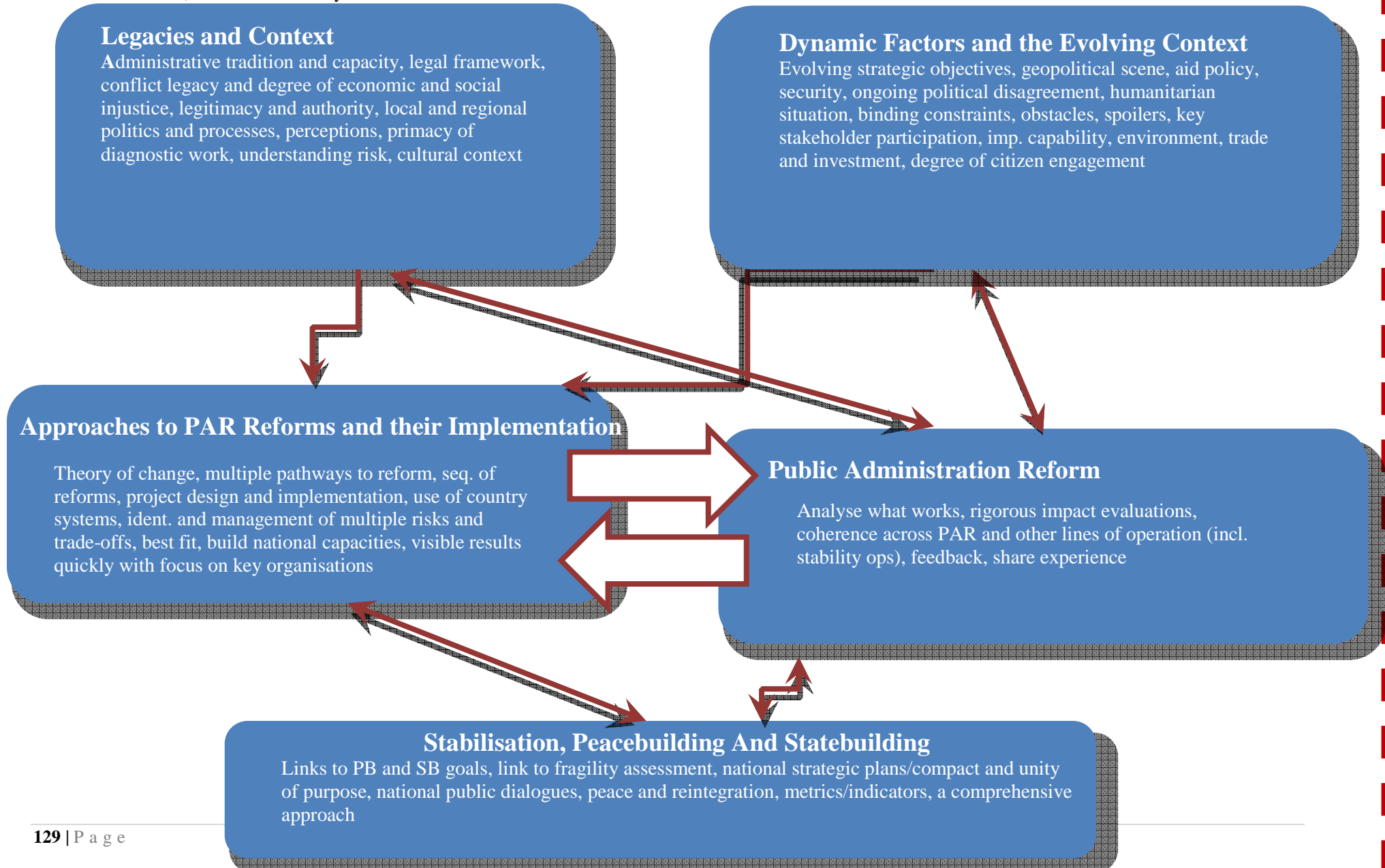
- *Legacies and Context* as a starting point – legacies of the past including the trajectory of conflict, the inherited system of governance and public administration, the legal systems and body of legislation, the political legacies, and the level of legitimacy and authority currently enjoyed by the government and/or other factions. These factors shape the way actors see the situation, how the ‘DNA’ of the administration and the political economy of Afghanistan is uncovered, and how one uncovers the art of the possible.
- *Dynamic Factors and the Evolving Context* – this includes understanding what is currently going on in Afghanistan and what has changed in the period 2002–12: the evolving security environment, changes in the economy, growing links to the outside world and changes in the geopolitical context, and evolving political systems and settlements both internally and externally. This changing context drives and modifies the approaches and aspirations of the International Community; it also shapes their interpretation of events. It will reflect the prevailing model of statebuilding and nationbuilding being pursued. It will dictate what are the highest priorities of the IC and the host government.

- *Approaches to PAR Reforms* – these are the specific reforms pursued by the International Community, government and other parties to improve public administration and specifically those civil service and administrative reforms, both implemented and planned.
- *PAR Outcomes and Achievements* – this encompasses the expected results and actual results in improvements to civil service and administrative reform as measured by a number of qualitative and quantitative approaches. It will relate to what is actually being measured and what is not.
- *Wider Links to the Principal Goals of the International Community* – including relationships to, and impacts on, statebuilding, peacebuilding, transition and stabilisation.

In chapters 4 and 5 this preliminary framework was fleshed out and elaborated on by an analysis of the primary source documents on CSAR covering the period 2002–12.

Figure 3.1 Preliminary Conceptual Framework – PAR in a Fragile/Conflict Affected State

Source: G. J. Wilson, Cranfield University



Yin (2009, pp.130–162) provides guidance on analysing the case evidence uncovered in both the desk research and the interviews. He suggests four possible strategies to meet the research objectives:

1. Relying on theoretical propositions – this seems to be a sensible starting point as the rationale for the Afghanistan case study, definition of the research question and objectives emerged from a set of original propositions concerning PAR in FCASs. Two propositions are (i) there are severe limits to institutionalism in an environment such as Afghanistan, and (ii) that creation and maintenance of a ‘second civil service’ in Afghanistan’s public administration was likely to have a deleterious effect on capacity development further exacerbating (i).
2. Developing a case description – this involves developing a descriptive framework where the ‘theoretical proposition’ approach is unlikely to yield progress. The research did not adopt this strategy.
3. Use of both qualitative and quantitative data – this general strategy can work well where there are substantial amounts of both types of good quality data. As research progressed in this case it was recognised that there was not as much good quality quantitative data as would have been preferred.
4. Examining rival explanations – Yin describes this process as the definition and testing of rival explanations which can be combined with any of the three above. This was regarded as a useful strategy as evidently there were different explanations of events, behaviours, outcomes etc. expressed by different parties such as consultants, donors, and government officials.

3.4.5 The Analysis

Background and Data Input (Sources)

Unless care is taken to represent the research design in NVIVO, subsequent analysis will be difficult. Using NVIVO for the first time therefore entails configuring the NVIVO software so that it is set up to reflect the conceptual framework for analysis. O’Neill (2013, p.1) identified a simplified four-stage method of analysis using NVIVO which seems to work well with the raw data generated by this research and is appropriate for the level of investigation required for PhD research. These four stages of analysis are:

1. Descriptive: Entering data sources into NVivo.
2. Topic: Organising and coding your data.

3. Analytic: Analysing and querying your data.
4. Conclusion: Drawing answers from your data.

O'Neill suggests that adopting this framework can guide the researcher from lower themes of descriptive analysis, through higher-order levels, to commence drawing objective conclusions. Research design therefore commenced by confirming the main source of the data: in this case, transcripts of interviews with key stakeholders. It is feasible, indeed desirable, to use NVIVO as an archive of all the project data. Accordingly, notes and memos were added; these were used to 'write up' the project as research evolved and coding was completed. The memos were used during the coding strategy stage and at the end of the research to produce reports. Other potential sources were considered, including some key comments from other parties such as parliamentarians, diplomats and members of civil society. In line with the recommendations noted above the transcripts were loaded up to the package in the Source data folder. It is here that the other data was added in a subfolder; this included some key email correspondence from stakeholders, and other reports and field notes. Classification of the transcript data (attributes) was organised by status (consultant, government employee, diplomat, NGO staff, Afghan, non-Afghan). These are the 'variables' and are used later in the analysis to run queries using the software. The design framework is shown at table 3.1:

Unit of Analysis	Variable (Attributes)	Time Frame	Data Type	Thematic Framework
People (Interviewees)	Consultant Civil Servant NGO	Snapshot in time	Interviews Responses from FGDs	Semi-structured broad questions Emergent fine coding
NVIVO Software Shell				
Case Nodes	Node Classification Sheet	Source Folders Sets (not required as no different time periods)		Nodes

Table 3.1 Design Framework for NVIVO Analysis

Raw Transcripts

It was decided to include the transcripts verbatim and not edit them in any way. It would have been possible to edit the interviews and then use only the completed summaries of the interviews but it was decided each transcript was important in its own right and would be analysed fully. It was also decided to include as a source the findings of the initial FGDs that were used to design and set up the initial 'Conceptual Framework for Analysis'.

Coding

Coding is not the analysis. Coding is the basic analytic process engaged in by the researcher. This is stage 2 in the process described above and entails extracting obvious topics that emerge from the data (the transcript). In NVIVO the resultant coding is stored in the 'node'. A node represents each topic or concept uncovered. In this research, a number of nodes had already been identified out of the framework for analysis and the initial FGDs; further nodes are created as new ideas and concepts emerge from a detailed reading of the transcripts. The coding process itself helps the researcher identify conditions, context, strategy, actions and consequences through relating categories to subcategories. O'Neill (2013), in her research, offers a 'top tip' that there is no 'right' code. Indeed, Bazeley and Jackson (2013) also note that this coding process is simultaneously a process of reflection on the data and shows similarities with the development of grounded theory. Each hour of transcript took approximately three hours to code. Ultimately the software retrieves all the data coded against a node and facilitates further analysis as described below.

Analysis and Use of Tools

NVIVO has tools to support organisation of data, to explore the data, reflect and integrate data as needed. The author used word frequency counts, text search queries, Boolean searches, and content and cluster analysis.

Triangulation

'Triangulation' is essentially triangulation of evidence, the evidence being interviews, observation and other data. The constant comparison is necessary to provide a more complete and complementary picture of what is actually happening. Triangulation of evidence is intended to ensure that no inadvertent bias creeps into the analysis and to cover the possibility that reliance on a single research method might be limiting. Yin (2009, p.115) emphasises the value of multiple sources of evidence in case study research but stresses the need to develop

‘converging lines of inquiry’, a process of triangulation and corroboration that helps to make any conclusion or finding more convincing and accurate if it is based on and corroborated by different sources of evidence. Thus interview data can corroborate findings from evaluations; interview data can shed light on political positions/conditionality.

3.5 Special Research Considerations: Ethical issues and Personal Bias

Ethical issues are a key consideration in any research project. McNabb (2008, p.20), talking specifically about research design for public administration, describes research ethics as the

“application of moral standards to decisions made in planning, conducting and reporting the results of research studies”.

The moral standards direct the researcher to be truthful, thorough and not take shortcuts, and to be relevant and objective. McNabb provides numerous examples of where these principles can be contravened, as do Bryman and Bell (2007, pp.132–3). Some advice is also available on the specific research issues faced by researching in areas of conflict (Druckman, 2005; Smyth, M. and Robinson, 2001).

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics (2012) is the most widely utilised in the social sciences applied in UK universities, even though it is frequently subject to some debate. The ESRC guidelines are useful for framing the discussion on ethics. The Guidelines³⁴ include six principles:

1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency.
2. Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.
3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
4. Research participants must take part voluntarily, free from any coercion.
5. Harm to research participants and researchers must be avoided in all instances.
6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.

³⁴ http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Framework-for-Research-Ethics_tcm8-4586.pdf. The new revised guidelines were accessed on 20 June 2013.

In Afghanistan, a country mired in conflict, it is particularly important to stress to the research subjects, the interviewees, that they will not suffer distress or be physically harmed in any way. They have the choice not to participate or allow revelations disclosed in the interviews to be made public. In this research, and after discussions with a number of participants prior to the interviews, it was decided to keep all individual responses anonymous in the final analysis. This was deemed important for two main reasons: individual responses were sometimes highly critical of the Government and its approach to reform (even from senior government officials themselves), and some responders anticipated they may be critical of their clients, either government or donors. Indeed, no respondents made any request *not* to remain anonymous. However, for the Focus Group Discussions, the different subgroups are identified where there are ten or more participants.

A copy of the information passed to interviewees is enclosed at Appendix A. The research design, in all cases, defined the study proposed, explained issues of confidentiality, procedures, timing, use of the research, any risks and so on. The ESRC guidelines state:

“Once risks have been identified, researchers should ensure that these are discussed with research participants in order to secure valid consent. When presented with sufficient appropriate information individuals will usually be able to use reasoned judgement to decide whether or not they wish to participate” (ESRC 2012, p.27).

In all cases interviewees proceeded with the interview. Another ethical issue is the importance of remaining ‘neutral’ if at all possible. The author has spent nearly 20 years working in FCASs and has had a continual engagement in Afghanistan since 1996. The author has also participated in a number of major interventions by the IC attempting to engage in PB and SB operations, including *inter alia* Bosnia, Timor Leste, Gaza and the West Bank, Iraq and Sudan. The author’s principal area of interest is public administration and post-conflict recovery. Interest in this topic has been spurred on by the continuous disappointment with past interventions in civil service and administrative reform in FCASs. It is thus likely and accepted that bias in viewpoint may creep in. It is anticipated that there may be some bias in the questions asked and in the interpretation of the subsequent discourse. It is impossible to attempt to eliminate all bias in the research and the author has used his best endeavours to become versed in interview techniques. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the researcher has attempted to turn possible bias into strength. Bryman and Bell (2007, p.144) emphasise the importance of trust and reciprocity between researcher and research

participants. Benefiting from the initial trust developed over many years of working in Afghanistan and the resulting network of clients and colleagues, it has been possible to define a more participatory and collaborative approach to finding answers to some difficult questions. One way to do this is to share results as they emerge, and present findings in an unbiased fashion noting the potential problem with uneven power relations between researcher and participants. This has involved additional meetings of a more informal social nature, support to unrelated initiatives in a 'pro bono' role, and conscious avoidance of potential conflicts of interest. The latter can help dispel the perception by host government officials that the researcher is just another donor consultant seeking to justify specific policy approaches.

In summary, carrying out research in Afghanistan is not easy. In a 2006 article written for the ESOMAR³⁵ Annual Congress by a newly established Afghan company ASCOR, the authors claimed that market research in Afghanistan was extremely difficult and involved 'starting from scratch'. They highlighted violence, lack of infrastructure, lack of education, cultural restrictions on access to women, ethnolinguistic variations and outdated and inconsistent population data as barriers to undertaking quality research. Unbiased commentary is extremely difficult to identify, unfavourable reports and evaluations often difficult to obtain. Wood (2006), talking about El Salvador, notes similar problems:

Field research in conflict zones is challenging for both methodological and ethical reasons. In conflict zones, the usual imperatives of empirical research (to gather and analyze accurate data to address a relevant theoretical question) are intensified by the absence of unbiased data from sources such as newspapers, the partisan nature of much data compiled by organisations operating in the conflict zone, the difficulty of establishing what a representative sample would be and carrying out a study of that sample, and the obvious logistical challenges. Similarly, the ethical imperative of research ('do no harm') is intensified in conflict zones by political polarization, the presence of armed actors, the precarious security of most residents, the general unpredictability of events, and the traumatization through violence of combatants and civilians alike (p.373).

Romano (2006), talks about the ethical problems involved in researching the conflict zones of the Middle East and specifically Kurdistan. Tomlinson and Benefield (2005, pp.12–13) talk about the difficulties of carrying out education research in conflict areas and highlight the big gap between research and practice. Wood sums up perfectly the situation as viewed by this researcher in Afghanistan:

³⁵ ESOMAR claims to be the world's leading industry body for market and opinion research professionals.

“Even with research practices and protocols tailored to specific field conditions, inevitably field researchers rely on their judgment in interpreting those norms. Yet very often academic training does a poor job preparing us for field research, particularly in conflict zones” (Wood 2006, p.385).

Despite the caveats this research made every possible effort to remain balanced and thorough.

3.6 Phases of Research

The research was organised in, broadly, four main phases, though phases 1 and 2 overlapped in some respects:

Phase 1: Scene-setting, scoping of issues, actor mapping and literature review

The research commenced with the parallel undertaking of the initial literature review and some preliminary focus group discussions to help identify the initial concepts under discussion: which is known as ‘foregrounding’. This in turn helped inform scope and content of the initial interviews, identifying key stakeholders. The outcome of phase 1 was the final review of literature and a preliminary conceptual framework for analysis of PAR in a FCAS.

Phase 2: Case study document review

Phase 2 consisted of a desk study of the situation regarding public administrative reform in the period 2002–12 and the links and timeline to the development of the transition strategy. The output from phase 2 is contained in Chapters 4 and 5. The review also contains a timeline of critical documents and international agreements. The review has a particular focus on the initial issues identified in the conceptual framework outlined in phase 1.

Phase 3: Interviews with key actors

Phase 3 involved a series of individual in-depth interviews (approximately five for each main group of stakeholders). Key questions that the research attempted to address at this stage were, broadly speaking:

- How investments in civil service and administrative reform were affected by the challenges associated with state fragility;
- The extent of sustainable progress in the development of CSAR in supporting wider state and peacebuilding objectives;
- The organisational issues/structures/processes, actors and relationships that emerged as a consequence;

- Power relationships and dependence (distribution and use of key resources – financial, political, informational, constitutional and organisational);
- Differing approaches to public administration reform and ‘Good Governance’;
- Issues around legitimacy (accountability, visibility, identity) and sovereignty;
- The barriers and bottlenecks to achieving reform and their impact on broader stabilisation and statebuilding objectives.

The output from phase 3 was an analysis of the responses that helped generate an updated version of the preliminary framework produced in phase 1. In the first instance the research collated and examined all the interview transcripts with the assistance of the NVIVO software package. The research summarised what was said by whom, bringing out any obvious key themes, topics and concerns. The summaries sought to understand: “What are the participants saying about x,y issues?”.

Phase 4 Final synthesis and triangulation of evidence findings

Phase 4 is the synthesis of consolidated evidence with the findings of Chapters 4 and 5, the notes and journal entries, and the final triangulation of findings, as well as the attempt to generate the theory or conceptual model finally presented.

3.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter a description of the research philosophy has been outlined. The various approaches to research design, strategy and possible research methods have been presented. The overall approach adopted is an ‘interpretivist’ approach, recognising the essentially subjective approach and one that relies heavily on a deeper engagement of the researcher. The research adopts a mainly qualitative research design but utilises empirical and non-empirical methods to enhance analysis. It utilises a single case study approach that is exploratory in nature and recognises the limitations of the setting and the degree of access possible in a conflict situation. Finally this chapter sets out the approach to detailed qualitative analysis, procedures for data analysis and software used, and the operationalisation of practical matters, the case study, interviewee selection and data analysis. Chapters 4 and 5 present the result of the documentation review. This is then followed by the qualitative analysis of the data collected in the fieldwork phase in chapter 6.

Chapter 4 Approaches to CSAR: Review of Key Primary Documentation

– From Emergency Project to Emergency Project

4.1. Introduction

Section 4.2 commences with a necessarily abridged review of the background to the development of public administration in Afghanistan. For context, this first section of the chapter is interwoven with a short overview of the conflict trajectory of Afghanistan, demonstrating the phases of violent conflict and relative stability.

The literature review suggested that a number of trends exist in FCASs with regard to CSAR, in particular the export of inappropriate models of public administration; ambiguity in the use of terms, particularly the term ‘governance’; lack of evidence as to what works; problems of prioritisation and sequencing; and the likely incidence of a variety of ‘wicked problems’ facing policymakers and practitioners in Afghanistan. These elements can all be seen in varying degrees as the Afghan Government and its development partners sought to restore public administration in Afghanistan after 9/11 in the face of increasing insecurity, escalating costs and uncertainty in evolving political ambitions.

Section 4.3 explores the initial approaches to rebuilding public administration. The section starts at the immediate post-2001 period, at the point of international intervention following the US-led Operation ‘Enduring Freedom’. The section looks at early priority setting. The analysis covers the perceived drivers of reform, initial planning and needs assessment, context analysis, and early design of interventions. This period also includes the establishment of the IARCSC, the development of the first major attempt at reform, Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR), and then its evolution into a wider pay and grading programme from 2006 onwards. This period 2001–5 represents the first phase when ‘emergency’ projects took place. The section concludes with a review of the comprehensive attempts at capacity development, leading up to the current major reform project, entitled Capacity Building for Results Project (CBR), the latest ‘emergency’ programme administered by the World Bank, and an analysis of what currently constitutes the PAR programme for Afghanistan in 2013.

Section 4.4 provides further *context* by examining the trail of international conference outcomes, agreements, plans and strategies through the last 12 years of support to Afghanistan, starting with the early negotiations surrounding the Bonn Agreement and its commitments in late 2001, through to the conferences in London, Kabul and Bonn 2 and then the Tokyo Conference of 2012, noting the growing emphasis on good governance (especially financial probity, anti-corruption and justice) and the changing approach to conditionality issues adopted by the IC.

Section 4.5 seeks to ascertain whether the design and implementation of CSAR operations in Afghanistan as part of a broader PAR programme reached its objectives and contributed to achieving sustainable progress in the development of CSAR. The analysis tries to identify whether the approaches adopted have worked and why and whether it is possible to identify lessons learnt (or not). The section commences with a short summary analysis of the aid monies allocated to CSAR, within the context of that allocated for overall PAR, and the aid budget as a whole. The purpose is to understand the relative priority attached to this subset of public administration in the overall aid budget and thus international investment in the rebuilding of Afghanistan. The final section (4.7) attempts to draw the chapter findings together.

The review presented in this chapter utilises a wide variety of primary source documents from both the GIRoA, donors, the military (ISAF-NATO) and other stakeholders, including but not limited to international agreements, strategy, policy reform approaches, programme and project documentation, research papers, project evaluations and related documents. The intention is to present a balanced summary of selected documents, reports and evaluations. The chapter also draws on comprehensive field notes made by the author.

4.2 Legacies and Starting Point: The Evolution of the Afghan State pre-9/11 and its Public Administration

Afghanistan remains a centralised state and the current 2004 Constitution makes this abundantly clear. Chapter Eight of the Constitution notes:

The government, while preserving the principle of centralism, shall – in accordance with the law – delegate certain authorities to local administration units for the purpose of expediting and promoting economic, social, and cultural affairs, and

increasing the participation of people in the development of the nation (GIROA, 2004).

During the last 150 years of Afghanistan's history the state has ruled from the centre whilst maintaining a tenuous but consistent connection to the periphery.

The reign of Abdurrahman, 'the Iron Amir' (1880–1901), was the first real period of consolidation of power at the centre. Louis Dupree (1980) describes Abdurrahman's task as:

putting in order all those hundreds of petty chiefs, plunderers, robbers and cut-throats. The objective necessitated breaking down the feudal and tribal system and substituting one grand community under one law and one rule (p.419).

The successors of Abdurrahman, Amir Habibullah Khan and Amanullah Khan continued to consolidate power and modernise the state apparatus in the first two decades of the 20th century though their methods were less successful than the brutal Abdurrahman (Rubin, 1988). Rubin also documents at this time the gradual split between a growing intellectual middle-class bureaucracy living in the capital Kabul and the rural staunchly conservative Islamic periphery.

Roy (2011) notes that the recent history of Afghanistan is one of revolts against the central power and of resistance to the penetration of the countryside by state bureaucracy. This theme of a strong centralised bureaucracy that made minimal demands of the countryside whilst modernising at its core in the post-war period is also picked up by Rubin (1992) and Leach (2011, p.12) and Rasanayagam (2009). However, they also characterise the Afghan state in the post-war period as having developed into a 'rentier state': corrupt, nepotistic and ripe for political change. Change duly arrived post-1973 with the fall of the monarchy and installation of the King's cousin, the former Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud, as President of the Republic.

Daoud's secular regime adopted close ties with the Soviet Union, which provided civil and military aid as they sought to bring Afghanistan within the sphere of Soviet influence. He developed a state-centred economy, and introduced an ambitious seven-year economic plan (1976–83) that included many major infrastructure projects. However, he also maintained contacts with the West and as early as 1974 began to distance himself from the military and economic support of the Soviet Union. Despite Daoud's apparent support for socialist policies and change, hard-line leftists rallied to carry out a coup backed by supportive military

officers, many of whom had been trained in the Soviet Union and had helped Daud seize power in 1973 (Rashid 2000, p.13). The coup duly arrived in 1978. Daud and most of his family members were killed in the presidential palace, instigating a long and bitter series of internal conflicts. The tumultuous impact of this day, and the relevance of legacies in the Afghan context, resonates 35 years later as the Taliban again released an annual press statement on the anniversary of the coup condemning it as the source of all Afghanistan's subsequent problems³⁶. The statement noted:

It should be said that the Khalq and Parcham parties staged a bloody coup against the government of Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan 35 years ago on 7 Sowr 1357(27 April 1978) which was the start of the problems and wars in Afghanistan which are still continuing.

Following Daud's death, Afghanistan was run by a divided group of Marxists that renamed the regime the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). However, the two Marxist factions that emerged at this time, Khalq and Parcham, engaged in continuous political infighting that ultimately led to internal purges, bloodshed and deterioration in the legitimacy of the communist DRA. The events leading to the Soviet invasion and occupation by the Soviet Union and its military forces from 1980–89 are all documented comprehensively by Roy (2011, pp.83–98) and Rubin (2002). Recent authors have attempted to shed more light on the political economy issues of the day including seeking Afghan interpretations of the ensuing 1978–92 civil war period (Giustozzi and Ibrahimi, 2012, p.15).

The Russian presence in Afghanistan is documented extensively by Bradsher (1985), Laber and Rubin (1988) and Cordovez and Harrison (1995). The Russians finally left Afghanistan in January 1989, apparently under the impression that it was ungovernable, divided into factions and doomed to be immersed in conflict that was of no benefit to the Soviets undergoing their own internal state transformation – the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. The vacuum left by the departing Soviets seemed to lead inexorably to a new phase in the Afghan conflict trajectory. Roberts (2009, p.7) summarises as follows:

There were other ways in which the Soviet–Afghan war led to subsequent wars. The channelling of much international aid to mujahidin groups through Pakistan reinforced the fateful link between events in Pakistan and those in Afghanistan. The power of non-State groups and regional military chiefs, and their tendency to rely on threats and uses of force not controlled by any State, became more deeply engrained

³⁶ Afghan Islamic Press News Agency, Peshawar, in Pashto 0742 GMT 27 April 2013, translated by BBC Monitoring Service.

than before in both Afghanistan and the frontier areas of Pakistan ... The problems of non-State violence, regional rivalries and the religious element in politics are not new to Afghanistan, but they were reinforced. Long-held suspicions toward certain types of foreign presence remained prominent.

Najibullah's Government (1987–1992), post-Soviet departure, was precariously placed. Despite home-grown efforts to promote national reconciliation, and although propped up by Soviet aid for two years before the Soviet Union itself collapsed in 1991, Kabul fell to various mujahadeen groupings in 1992. Najibullah was to spend the next four years in the UN Compound in Kabul. A vicious destructive civil war commenced during the period 1992–96, leading inexorably to the rise of the Taliban in the rural south, documented extensively by Rashid (2010, pp.17–40) and Maley (2002). During this period, Kabul was reduced to rubble as the opposing forces of Tajiks (under Rabbani and Masud) battled the Pashtun forces of Hekmatyar who had laid siege to Kabul. The collapse of Kabul, and the emptying of its population, dealt a devastating blow to an already weak state administrative structure; many bureaucrats left at this time.

On 26 September 1996, the Tajik forces left Kabul overnight and the Taliban took control of the city. In a first most brutal and symbolic act they murdered Najibullah, hanging his mutilated body from a traffic post adjacent to the presidential palace³⁷. The Taliban then set about establishing a system of Islamic government not seen anywhere in the world before, renaming Afghanistan the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan'. Women were banned from work, even though approximately one third of the civil service were female. Administrative decisions of the new Government were initially, and almost solely, dedicated to imposing an Islamic code of behaviour. The Taliban set about revising all laws according to their strict interpretation of Islam. The new 'central government' was now composed of officials in the 'Kabul Shura' who deferred to the Taliban 'Kandahar Shura' for even minor decisions.

Rashid (2000) notes that many new ministers in the Taliban 'Emirate' were also military commanders who governed in-between military campaigns and could be (and were) removed from ministerial positions on a regular basis. Rashid also notes, and this is confirmed by the author who worked with the Taliban ministries during 1996–98, that many senior Tajik, Uzbek and Hazzara civil servants were replaced by inexperienced Pashtun officials, making even basic administration extremely difficult. No agenda for establishing 'government' was

³⁷ The author was resident in Kabul at the time and was one of four UN officials left in the city.

ever actually produced by the Taliban. Ultimately the Taliban had no agenda for what sort of state they envisaged or what role the various ethnic groups would have in an Islamic State of Afghanistan. They were at all times deeply engaged in military campaigns, simultaneously attempting to impose and interpret their own Islamic views rooted in their rural tribal society. It was not until 2005, four years after they had been ousted in 2001, that the Taliban Central Shura (Council) actually drafted a Constitution of the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan', and it was not made public until 2007.

The period leading up to 2001 saw the Taliban under increasing pressure from UN sanctions as well as sustained military pressure internally. By 2000 some 2500 Arab fighters had swelled their ranks and a new partner, 'Al Qaeda', had pledged support to Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader. The Al Qaeda connection was to prove fatal as the events of 9/11 unfolded. A few days after the events of 9/11 President Bush announced his well-known "war on terror"³⁸ and Pakistan was given an ultimatum to stop supporting the Taliban or be perceived as acting against the emerging international coalition, which now included NATO.

On 7 October 2001, the US Administration started 'Operation Enduring Freedom'. The US attacked training camps, Taliban infrastructure and frontline forces. The campaign lasted just two months before Kandahar fell to the US-supported Northern Alliance (NA) forces in early December 2001.

The consequences of the political changes wrought in Afghanistan over the last 40 years can be seen through the continual focus on the required changes to the Afghan Constitution. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Afghanistan, 1343 (1964), had been replaced by President Daud in 1977. Then after the coup of 27 April 1978 (the Saur Revolution), this 1977 Constitution was abolished. Both Taraki (Head of State from April 1978 to September 1979) and his successor, Hafizullah Amin (September–December 1979), promised to introduce new constitutions, but these leaders were removed from power before any drafts had been prepared by the special commissions which they had appointed. On 21 April 1980, the Revolutionary Council ratified the 'Basic Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan'. These principles were then superseded by a new Constitution ratified in April

³⁸ President Bush first used this phrase in a speech to the US Congress on 20 September 2001. Transcript accessed on 13 March 2013 at <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>.

1985. Yet another new Constitution was ratified during a meeting of a Loya Jirgah (Supreme National Tribal Assembly), held on 29–30 November 1987. This Constitution was in turn amended in May 1990³⁹. Finally, post-9/11, a new Constitution was approved in 2004. Even the Taliban eventually provided a constitution in 2007 based on their specific interpretation of Islam. At the time of writing in 2012, a new constitution is expected after the 2014 elections.

The summary presented above demonstrates the complex series of events that the citizens of Afghanistan had endured before the point at which Western forces ‘liberated’ the country. Afghanistan had experienced 28 years of continual conflict, extremes of political ideology and weak governments, increasing sectarian divisions and mass migration.

4.3 Approaches to Civil Service and Administrative Reform

4.3.1 Initial Priority Setting

PSR in Afghanistan post-9/11 commenced as soon as the IC began negotiations with a new Afghan Authority to replace the remnants of the Taliban administration. The political process in Bonn following the success of the military ousting of the Taliban resulted in agreement on the formation of the Afghanistan Interim Administration (AIA) as set out in the Bonn Agreement (2001). The Agreement also specified that the AIA:

Shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, an independent Civil Service Commission to provide the Interim Authority and the future Transitional Authority with shortlists of candidates for key posts in the administrative departments, as well as those of governors and uluswals, in order to ensure their competence and integrity.

Despite the undoubted early emphasis on political settlement and leadership, the early years of intervention in Afghanistan were framed mainly in terms of reconstruction. The challenge of rebuilding administration following the events of 2001 is difficult to exaggerate. The situation in Kabul, Afghanistan, after the Northern Alliance captured Kabul in 2001, was a city 70% destroyed. The UN, in the report of the Secretary General, noted at the time:

At its inception, the Interim Administration had no funds of its own, yet it faced the daunting task of finding buildings to house a number of newly established departments ... and procuring basic office furniture and equipment to enable

³⁹ See http://afghantranslation.checchiconsulting.com/documents/constitution/Constitution_1990-1369_Amdt_Summary_ET.htm accessed 19 January 2013.

departmental staff to begin working. In addition, the Interim Administration had no means of paying the salaries of its new members, let alone of the civil servants at all levels who had not been paid for five to six months (UNSG, 2002).

Since the commencement of the Afghan Civil War in 1978, the majority of government staff were either killed in the fighting or had emigrated over the previous 25 years. By the end of the 1980s, Iran and Pakistan alone were hosting three million refugees each⁴⁰. In 1996, the population of Kabul had reduced to approximately 400,000 persons⁴¹.

The AIA took power on 22 December 2001 with Hamid Kharzai appointed the Interim Head. A hastily convened Steering Committee of donor governments requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UNDP and the World Bank (WB) to conduct an urgent preliminary needs assessment for consideration at a Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo on 21–22 January 2002. The assessment did not cover humanitarian needs; rather, its focus was on identification of a range of activities to address both short-term priorities and options for the longer term. The ADB, the UNDP and the World Bank were also asked to produce estimated funding requirements covering horizons of 1, 2.5 (the expected term of the Transitional Administration), 5 and 10 years (UN, WB, ADB, 2002). The initial assessment was, however, severely restricted and the authors noted presciently:

In view of the turmoil in Afghanistan over the past 20 years, systematic data collection has not always been possible. Moreover, available information can be contradictory; national 'statistics' have been extrapolated from surveys with limited sample size. No fieldwork has been possible, given time and security constraints, to improve on this existing information.(p.1)

There had been no census in Afghanistan since 1979. Despite the difficulties in collecting data, opinions and undertaking surveys, the highest priorities were identified as:

1. Achieving security.
2. The establishment of sound and trusted basic governance arrangements.
3. Labour-intensive public works programmes to rehabilitate infrastructure and create much-needed jobs.
4. The immediate expansion of health and education services (p.3).

The report then listed seemingly every possible task faced by the new Government across all fields, broken down by immediate, medium- and longer-term needs. The original budget to

⁴⁰ Refugee figures accessed at <http://www.unhcr.org/421316072.pdf>.

⁴¹ UNCHS Habitat Field Surveys (reference not available) instigated by the author.

achieve redevelopment over the next ten years was suggested to be \$18 billion at its highest⁴². In fact, US\$90 billion has since been pledged in external assistance (2002–13), of which US\$69 billion has been committed (2002–11) and US\$57 billion disbursed (2002–10). Since 2002, almost the entire Development Budget and, on average, up to approximately 52% of the Operating Budget of Afghanistan has been financed by foreign aid (GIROA, 2012).

The original reconstruction estimates contained in the 2002 Needs Assessment were based on a number of assumptions, a key one being the size of the government workforce. The original objective of the AIA and the IC was based on the concept of limited but effective government, translating to a comparatively small but reasonably well-paid government workforce. The Banks and UNDP suggested that a total government workforce of 1% of population (including central, provincial, and local governments, but not the military) would suffice. This would be lower than comparable countries in the region, and among the lowest in the developing world⁴³. They also assumed a substantial reliance on the private sector, Afghan communities and NGOs to deliver public services. The estimated number of people employed by the administration in 2001 was 170,000⁴⁴. 2001 government wages were estimated to be approximately \$1–2 per day. The World Bank initially estimated a living wage in 2002 to be approximately \$1000 per year (approximately \$88 per month) though it is not entirely clear in the circumstances whether this was based on a full understanding of local costs. Evidently it did not anticipate either the inflation generated by the growing international donor presence. A workforce of 250,000 staff paid \$1000 per year yields an annual wage bill of \$250 million, which was regarded as a manageable figure for the Government. Within 18 months the initial pay scales evidently were not sufficient to attract high-quality staff and the government introduced Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) and a number of other pay initiatives and incentives, as a vehicle to increase pay levels, to encourage ministerial restructuring tied to the pay incentives, and to tempt qualified Afghans back into public service.

By 2012 (1392) the actual figures for civil service employment shown at Table 4.1 demonstrate how far off the initial estimates turned out to be:

Category	Numbers	Salary Bill
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⁴² This was the high point of a range of estimates.

⁴³ A population of about 25 million would therefore yield an 'optimal' total government workforce of 250,000.

⁴⁴ This was very much an estimate with little hard evidence available at the time to prove the real numbers.

Civil Servants (including 184,143 teachers)	384,824 ⁴⁵	55,529MillAfs (\$1.06Billion)
ANSF (Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police) + Afghan Local Police (ALP)	195,000 (ANA) + 157,000 (ANP) = 352,000 Plus 30,000 (ALP) <i>Note: in 2004 the Afghan Armed forces were 56,400 and the ANP 57, 962</i> ⁴⁶	86,553MillAfs (\$1.664Billion) This also include USD 5.7 million wage bill for the Afghan local police (190 USD per person)
ANSF (General Directorate for National Security)	40,741	8,018MillAfs (\$154Million)

Table 4.1 Public Sector Employment 2012

Source: MoF, Budget Book 2012 and correspondence with MoF Officials, exchange rate 52Afs=1USD.

On the issue of pay levels, comprehensive reforms to government pay scales were introduced in 1388 (2008) (see section 4.3.4). From 2008, base salaries increased significantly, between 50 and 100%, from an average of US\$70 to US\$138 a month and US\$92 to US\$147 a month for civil servants and teachers respectively⁴⁷. From 2008 the Government also significantly increased the size of the civil service, military and police in response to a deteriorating security situation.

Clearly, the original World Bank estimates of civil service establishment, pay levels and total wages bill proved to be some way off the final figures. In addition, the costs of maintaining security were also much higher than originally assumed, as can also be seen from Table 4.1. Whilst early control over the size of the civil service was exercised, as this research will demonstrate in Section 4.5, post-2006 the public service expanded well beyond initial estimates.

A second key assumption that this Chapter will revisit later is the figure assumed for Operations and Maintenance. The Banks cited ‘international norms’ for adequate Operations

⁴⁵ As a general rule of thumb, the senior civil service makes up around 1% of total numbers. See Structure of the Civil Service Employment in Seven OECD Countries, accessed 25 March 2013
<http://www.oecd.org/governance/pem/1910699.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Source: World Bank Afghanistan public employment and wages model as at 4 June 2004 (unpublished).

⁴⁷ Personal correspondence with senior IARCSC official.

and Maintenance (O&M) expenditure as being about one third and two thirds of the gross wage bill. The cost estimates therefore assumed O&M expenditure to be equal to 66% of the wage bill for the first 2.5 years, but then declining thereafter to 50% of the civil service wage bill (UN,WB, ADB, 2002). However, with an estimated shortfall for the main areas of O&M in 2014 estimated to be \$2.17 billion as shown in Table 4.2, this is more than double the 2012 civil service wage bill, which is itself four times the original wage bill estimates.

In USD Mill	Education	Health	Rural Livelihoods	Transport	Electricity	Totals
1390 Core Budget Allocation	706	210	432	345	182	1875
Salaries and wages	454	37	27	10	21	549
O&M Non-payroll	56	19	8	28	39	150
Development	193	144	397	306	121	1161
Estimated O&M Requirement in 2014	\$234	77	11	394	297	<u>2174</u>

Table 4.2: Estimated O&M Budget 2010

Source: World Bank Staff Estimates 2012.

The Banks and UNDP then elaborated on the need for ‘good governance’ and linked it to sound economic management. Good governance was described as transparency, participation, accountability and the rule of law (UN,WB, ADB, 2002, p.15). The immediate need to restore sound civil administration was highlighted and specified as:

- i. *Undertaking a comprehensive review and needs assessment for reform of the civil service;*
- ii. *Designing and implementing a salary structure for regular government employees that pays a living wage and is fiscally sustainable;*
- iii. *Attending to immediate issues of staffing (claims of former civil servants, their selective reintegration, equitable entry and exit rules) and related staff training; formulating special procedures to attract Afghanistan citizens currently living abroad who can bring back (a least for short periods) highly needed skills;*
- iv. *Re-establishing gender balance;*
- v. *Keeping the size of the public service small but effective (e.g., 1% of population), which will allow higher salaries to help combat corruption;*
- vi. *Modernizing personnel rules and regulations for the future;*
- vii. *Fighting corruption; and*
- viii. *Making special arrangements for reconstruction (UN,WB, ADB, p.16).*

The Banks and UNDP then provided a summary ‘Immediate Actions for Quick Impact Investment and Policy Action’. With regard to civil service and administrative issues, these were:

- *Establish rules and procedures for the civil service*
- *Establish pay scales and pensions*
- *Create intergovernmental institutional framework to define the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government and how local governments and communities can collaborate. Policy decisions are also required for targeting mechanisms for distribution of resources among districts and communities within districts (UN, WB, ADB, 2002, pp.56–57).*

Whether any of the above priorities could be or were addressed ‘quickly’ is open to debate, but the initial level of ambition was undoubtedly high. As a sign of the level of expectations noted in this first needs assessment the report states:

The disruption of the last two decades offers an opportunity to rebuild government structures. Recreating the government activities and systems of public management of the 1970s seems neither necessary nor desirable.

As will be seen this level of ambition was to be diminished in the near future. In the Tokyo Conference itself which followed on immediately after preparation of the above ‘Needs Assessment’, on 21–22 January 2002, the AIA was recorded as identifying and reporting to the Conference the following key priority areas:

1. *Enhancement of administrative capacity, with emphasis on the payment of salaries and the establishment of the government administration;*
2. *Education, especially for girls;*
3. *Health and sanitation;*
4. *Infrastructure, in particular roads, electricity and telecommunications;*
5. *Reconstruction of the economic system, in particular, the currency system;*
6. *Agriculture and rural development, including food security, water management and revitalising the irrigation system (Tokyo Conference, 2002, p.2).*

In summary, generally there is a reasonable consistency across the high-level priorities for reconstruction. The sequence of documents described above demonstrates that early thought – indeed, priority – was given to government administration and civil service and administration issues. The priority areas identified resonate with conventional approaches to public administration reform at that time, as identified in Chapter 2. This approach is one that emphasises formality, uniformity and predictability of reforms with an emphasis on the need

to restrict costs of public sector employment by ‘right-sizing’ (usually downsizing) either through restructuring or retrenchment.

The first principal analysis of ‘needs’ was carried out by technical teams in the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the United Nations, made up mostly of international consultants working with a few key government officials. The extent to which these organisations mimicked international ‘best practice’ in their recommendations and/or incorporated the views of Afghans is subject to some discussion in the interviews contained in Chapter 5. It is clear that all available documents setting out priorities were produced by international organisations. It is also clear reading across to other post-conflict interventions at the time that the early approach does mirror some of the early lessons identified by the World Bank in their support to civil service reform in post-conflict countries, most notably East Timor and Kosovo (World Bank, 2002a). Elements of the early PAR programme also resemble strongly early Action Plans for reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina following the war, for example Republika Srpska (2000) and the early support by the European Union to help draft ‘modern’ civil service laws.

It is tempting to think that when the IC returned en masse to Afghanistan in 2002 there had been a long hiatus in any attempts at civil service and administrative reform. However, this was not the case. As stated previously, the Russians had been enthusiastic supporters of developing government in Afghanistan, constructing many of the main ministry buildings and investing strongly, perhaps understandably, in the Ministries of Defence and Interior. The Soviets also supported the creation of the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) in the President’s Office as a replacement for the Cabinet Secretariat function that had previously been carried out in the Prime Minister’s Office. This office was created along typical Soviet lines to work with ‘bureaux’ to support the central planning function of the Ministry of Economy to manage the ‘planned economy.’ Lawmaking never stopped in Afghanistan. Even the Taliban regime, despite its deficiencies as previously noted, continued to function in the period 1996–2001 and dealt with a number of pressing administrative issues including passing a new Municipalities Law in 1999. They also passed a number of decrees concerning civil service pay and changes to terms and conditions of employment. Close reading of the Taliban Employment and Labour Relations and Personnel Law (unknown but likely 1998 or 1999), however, does not appear to openly discriminate against women.

The administrative landscape of Afghanistan was not bare in 2001. Any suggestion that this was finally, though belatedly, proved wrong by the findings of a joint World Bank–AREU publication in 2004 that described comprehensively a system that, despite collapsing politically, had remained remarkably intact ‘administratively’ through many years of conflict (Evans et al., 2004). Some, though not all, of the administrative DNA was intact.

4.3.2 Early Actions

The author was one of the first public administration ‘experts’ to visit and assess the public administration on the ground as part of the first World Bank (WB) mission in early 2002, tasked with preparing projects for technical assistance and supporting the drafting of necessary Administrative Decrees for the Chairman of the AIA. It is important to stress the great speed at which the IC was working to support the establishment of the AIA. All of the assessments and field work, leading to a prioritised Action Plan were completed in a period of approximately 16 weeks from the signing of the Bonn Agreement.

The WB Aide Memoire⁴⁸ prepared at the time noted, after a number of site visits to government installations, that government records had been destroyed or were lying in piles of dust or in soaked basements. The remaining staff were unpaid and turned up for work irregularly. Most government offices were destroyed or in very poor repair. Significant arrears in the payment of salaries had built up but were not accurately quantified. There was no electricity, and little equipment or resources to work on the most basic of tasks. This mission was the first extended attempt to systematically appraise the situation on the ground and to prescribe specific action to be taken by the AIA with support from the IC. The mission examined, *inter alia*, CSAR issues focusing immediately on:

- **Merit-Based Recruitment** – what could be done to ensure that all future civil service recruitment would be merit-based and, to reassure the donors, that the Civil Service Commission stipulated in the Bonn Agreement could be established quickly?
- **Pay Reform** – scope what would be needed to undertake a rational pay reform based on two essential inputs: a comprehensive job evaluation and grading of civilian

⁴⁸ Unfortunately lost, but the following section is based on the author’s field notes and inputs to the Aide Memoire made at the time. Aide Memoires are produced by the Bank’s field missions as a ‘report back to office’.

central government posts, and, secondly, development of an HR database linked to payroll.

- **Special Pay Scales for Qualified Afghan Staff** – what was the potential to establish a category of contract employees, employed and paid through the budget, to enable ministers and provincial governors to bring highly qualified staff into key posts at competitive salaries.
- **Ministerial Reform and Restructuring** – this was intended originally to focus on a number of key government departments; the departments would be selected for their ability to reform, and would be staffed by civil servants appointed on merit who would then be placed on a special enhanced ‘interim pay scale’.
- **Strengthening Policymaking in the Heart of Government** – this focused on the significant problems that were known to exist in the government decision-making processes.

The Bank attempted to focus attention on the urgency of its support by recommending to the AIA some suggested actions to be taken for the first 100 days of the Administration. The table summarises those actions relevant to civil service and administrative reform, which went under the strapline “*Making the Civil Service Work Better*”. Table 4.3 sets out the immediate agenda for civil service and administrative reform in summary form, with the ‘issue’ in Column 1, and the recommended actions in Column 2.

Issue	Recommended Actions (March 2002)
There are few experienced and qualified professionals in government service Ethnic-based recruitment might increase Patronage appointments might become normal	Establish the CSC to ensure that all future civil service recruitment is merit-based and meets the stipulations of the Bonn Agreement Amend the 1970 Statute of State Employees Review of all Public Employment and Labour Law legislation and prepare for consolidation of civil service laws and labour law and develop any necessary secondary legislation Technical assistance to the CSC, training in recruitment methods and oversight, comprehensive job evaluation and re-grading exercise, training of government staff in job inspection techniques Preparation of a Government Manual on Job Evaluation and Grading Development of a human resources database and a computerised payroll Remove ghost workers and computerise the payroll

Donors might not fund the budget	Take action to build credibility in the budget process Improve public finance management
Pay system cannot attract or motivate skilled civil servants, grading system outdated, no incentives for hard work	Establish Immediate Capacity Enhancement Groups (donor-funded) and in-house Senior Management Teams (budget-funded) to get service delivery and project implementation moving Enable ministers and provincial governors to bring in highly qualified staff on contract into key posts at competitive salaries
No single agency or ministry has responsibility for managing the public service. Five Agencies with various responsibilities. No one feels responsible for ensuring improvements	Establish the CSC
Fragmented government structures with overlapping functions and unnecessary tasks	Assist government in conducting functional reviews Undertake a ministry by ministry review of tasks and proposals for simplification
Cost of government is not affordable in the current fiscal environment. Many unproductive state employees, significantly overpaid at lower levels Government employment offers an inefficient approach to welfare provision	Assist in designing and implementing a retrenchment and retraining programme for old employees. Provide advice on severance payment levels, eligibility requirements, and addressing wage arrears Propose and help implement mechanisms for retraining Comprehensive reform of state-owned enterprises – privatisation Assist government in designing and establishing the Commission for Enterprise Reform and Privatization. Provide advice on the structure of the commission Set out and help implement the sequence of steps necessary for 'corporatising' state enterprises and for privatisation
Ministers are inexperienced They have not been ministers, members of the assembly or civil servants before. Ministerial accountability is unclear	Prepare a package of training for ministers. Promote live and video links with ministers in other countries Adopt a ministerial code of conduct that explains 'collective accountability' and advises how to avoid 'conflicts of interest'
Cabinet is poorly supported No analysis of decisions that they are asked to make or monitoring of the consequences Support staff are overwhelmed by the number of ministers	Set out the procedures for cabinet to ensure that ministers receive a minimum set of information on proposals Require some monitoring of cabinet decisions Advice on role of cabinet, rules for collective decision-making, establishment of cabinet subcommittees and the role of the support staff
Overlaps between the line ministries and the Office of Administrative Affairs Overlaps among line	Establish a commission of ministers to propose a simplification of government to oversee functional reviews that identify which functions are priority and who should undertake them and to require ministries to cooperate

ministries within the same policy areas	Provide advice to the Office of Administrative Affairs Design proposals for a simplification of procedures and clarification of responsibilities Preparing the OAA for liaison with a future National Assembly, and for improving legal drafting.
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Table 4.3 Early Recommended Actions by Joint UNDP and World Bank Mission

Source: Compiled by author from field notes, the 100-day plan presented by the World Bank to the AIA – ‘Making the Civil Service Better’, and preliminary draft decrees.

Following this initial analysis, the World Bank drafted a Transitional Support Strategy (TSS) for Afghanistan and in April 2002 the World Bank (with some technical and financial support from DFID) approved its first operation in Afghanistan since 1979, a \$10 million emergency grant to assist the AIA, with key public administration functions to enable it to effectively use its public resources. In May 2002 the Bank opened its Afghanistan office and then launched the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), to help the AIA fund physical reconstruction projects and provide a vehicle to pay salaries for civil servants. Soon thereafter the Bank’s support was expanded to provide a total of \$100 million in grant financing in the fiscal year 2002. The Bank also proposed a further \$470 million for the lifespan of the transitional government elected by the Loya Jirga in June 2002 (World Bank, 2002).

4.3.4 Establishment of the Civil Service Commission (IARCSC)

The Commission was not actually established until May 2002 (1381) by Presidential Decree No. 25. After its passage a further Decree, No. 26, a month later, amended and extended the responsibilities of the Civil Service Commission to include administrative reform and the Commission was renamed the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC). Understanding why the IARCSC looks like it does today requires an understanding of the evolution of civil service management in Afghanistan. The original intention of the first Decree was to respect the existing 1970 Law on the Status and Condition of Government Employees (Article 6). This established two bodies to deal with the administration of employees, with the following names and roles and responsibilities:

1. Civil Service Commission (CSC) – to deal with appointments.
2. Civil Services Administration (CSA) – administration and management of the civil service.

This Act was amended in a 1977 Decree (1433) that renamed the CSC the ‘Central Administration of Employees and Administrative Reforms’. The Decree also proposed that

the Administration would report to the prime minister on its work. Staff Regulation 12.3.1356 (1977) contains many regulations that duplicate the contents of the 1970 Law, especially those that related to salary and other benefits, promotion and resignation. The Regulation cancelled other regulations published in 1969 but does not mention the 1970 Law. Despite the change of name introduced in 1977 the 'Administration' was apparently not successful and was effectively dissolved. During the ensuing ten years of communist rule and Soviet occupation a number of its functions were merged or hived off to other organs of government such as the newly established Office of Administrative Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). After the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the UN, in a report on public administration, apparently suggested re-establishment of the Civil Service Administration (Evans et al., 2004, p.59). Seemingly it was also the intention of the Government at the time to merge the Administration Section of the Ministry of Finance with the re-established CSA – again, the CSA was proposed to report to the prime minister. However, in the intervening period of unrest and civil war nothing was implemented and effectively the CSA was again dissolved on the arrival of the Taliban in 1996. Given all the upheavals in Afghanistan at the time it is highly likely that its work would have been impossible to undertake anyway.

Thus, in summary, the original 'Expert Group appointed by the Interim Authority for The Preparation for the Establishment of the Civil Service Commission', which was a mix of international officials and Afghan officials, originally suggested a new organisational structure that was essentially a modest modification of the old structure and organisation. The World Bank mission on Civil Service Reform reviewed the Expert Group and provided advice on the final drafting⁴⁹. It is therefore worth recalling that the IARCSC was originally designed to function solely as a Public Service Commission (aka Civil Service Commission) responsible for civil service management only. The initial intention and recommendation in 2002 was to place the administrative reform component in the Office of Administrative Affairs (the Afghan equivalent of a cabinet office) close to the President's Office. This recognised the administrative tradition of Afghanistan, as the 'Administrative Reform Directorate' had, in the past, been a part of the Prime Minister's Office. However, the Prime Minister post was now defunct. The original intention was also to make the Independent Appeals and Appointments Boards fully independent after the AIA had completed its work

⁴⁹ Based on field notes made at the time.

and a National Assembly (Wolesi Jirga) put in place by the end of 2005. However, it has stayed within the IARCSC since 2002 and its ‘independence’ therefore remains in question.

The Commission, as established through the Decree, was therefore made up of:

- i. The Independent Appointments Board and an Independent Appeals Board.
- ii. The Civil Service Management Department.
- iii. The Administrative Reform Secretariat.

The main purpose of the Commission was to create a professional, impartial, and accountable civil service as a vital aspect of an efficient and effective state. The Decree stated clearly that the CSC would be the principal agency responsible for developing a recruitment and selection code for the hiring of all the senior professional staff in Ministries, and Administrative Units. The setting up of the Commission with the three functions outlined above therefore put everything ‘in one place’ with, initially, a direct line to the President through the Vice President, acting as the chair of a Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) for Administrative Reform, formed to provide oversight (GIROA Decree 25, art2). MAC members were also senior ministers in the biggest ministries. In December 2004 the transitional government was replaced by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, although the legislative branch elections were delayed until 2005. On 24 December 2004 significant changes were made to the Cabinet formation. As the interviews confirm, it was perceived that this marked a change to a more political (rather than technocratic) Council of Ministers that was less focused on reform issues. Additionally, the demise of the MAC in August 2005 is cited by a number of reports and by interviewees in chapter 5 as instrumental in losing the minimal political consensus that the MAC generated.

In order not to burden the Commission with an impossible workload early on, it was also proposed that a number of other bodies would remain involved in HR procedures. The Commission would work with line ministries and the MoF in reviewing public sector pay. The Commission would also work closely with the OAA and line ministries to review the functions of ministries and other government agencies. In addition, the management of the Central Personnel Register and the management of records initially remained with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs although the Commission was tasked to work with MoLSA to ensure that records were recovered and subsequently maintained in good order.

The early days of the Commission, for the first 18 months or so, were spent necessarily appointing the ‘independent’ commissioners and staff. However, by the end of 2004, the Commission, whilst it had a projected tashkeel of 156 staff, had only 58 government employees and 44 externally financed staff in post (Goldsworthy and Prince, 2003). The Civil Service Management Department (CSMD) in particular had no staff at all. Thus serious doubts were already being expressed in some quarters on the ability of the Commission to implement its mandate. Goldsworthy and Prince (2003, p.3) also noted that the Commission’s organisation and management structure remained unclear, there was still no overall work plan for the Commission, and that:

few staff, even at more senior levels, have been assigned genuine management responsibility and authority; in effect, the Vice President and his Special Adviser are the only decision-makers ... little headway has been made in several important policy areas, such as appeals procedures and personnel management policies.

The rest of their report analysed most functions across the Commission and recommended immediate action in nearly all areas. Their report was prepared as a precursor to the commencement of five major donor-funded programmes:

- Three projects under the joint World Bank/DFID Second Emergency Public Administration Programme (SEPAP); and
- Two other programmes funded by the ADB and the EC.

All the programmes above were technical assistance projects focused mainly on implementing the Commission’s mandate.

Then at the same time as attempting to recruit staff, prepare working procedures and basic legislation, and build the capacity of the newly appointed IARCSC staff, work commenced immediately on ambitious projects of institution-building and particularly to introduce pay and grading reform tied to administrative reform. Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) was introduced by Presidential Decree in July 2003. Hakimi et al. (2004, p.14) noted the Decree was passed despite serious political concerns, especially about the possibility of redundancies, the potential for consolidation of ministries, and unfair differentials in pay between, and even within, ministries and agencies. PRR was thus introduced at a time when there were serious concerns about the ability of the Commission to do even basic administrative tasks and with a radical reform agenda. With hindsight many of those concerns

proved correct but Hakimi et al. (2004) claimed that in the circumstances there were few reform alternatives available, acknowledging that the early attempt at reform might best be described as ‘heroic’. A Priority Reform and Restructuring (Civil Service Reform) Fund of US\$18 million was approved in the 2004 budget to finance PRR.

A number of presidential decrees were then passed to support the initial work of the IARCSC. The first was to encourage recruitment of professional expatriate Afghans (Decree No. 124, 2 March 2004). The recruitment and final selection of Expatriate Afghans was to be made by the MAC in a move that appeared to cut across the competencies and performance of the ‘independent’ commissioners charged by the IARCSC to approve appointments. It was also recognition that the Commission did not have the capacity to manage such a project as well as ensuring appointments remained within the gift of the MAC. The salaries of these staff were met through the ARTF Expatriate Component (ARTF EX.C) set up specifically for the purpose. This was the genesis of the setting up of a number of parallel pay schemes that were to expand significantly in the coming years.

4.3.5 Sequence and Evolution of Project Support

Following the early identification of priorities and initial project set-up, a number of other projects followed in quick succession. Appendix A lists all the projects implemented in or with the IARCSC since 2002.

The period 2002–6 is therefore best termed as the ‘early period’ where the initial priorities were addressed by a number of emergency projects that covered a wide range of normative civil service and administrative reform issues. Post-2004, new projects focused increasingly on the capacity building issue as this had also been cited as a top priority in the first National Development Framework (AIA 2002) and in the early prioritisation exercises. In addition, work commenced in 2003 on updating the civil service law that was intended to establish a modern legislative base.

The second period might best be described as a ‘transition period’. In the years 2006–8 the first version of the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) was under preparation, acting simultaneously as the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. In addition, and as set out in section 4.6, the security situation in Afghanistan was deteriorating markedly. Frustration with the pace of progress had crept in, resulting partly in the signing of the Afghanistan

Compact. Increasing problems with budget execution rates and successive poor evaluations from initial PAR interventions (see Section 4.5) meant that the early period of optimism had come to an end.

The ANDS (2008) emphasised the importance of addressing pay and grading reform. Accordingly, the Government approved a new pay and grading policy and prepared to roll out the policy to all civil service personnel in a four-year period. This third period lasted from 2008–12. The driving force for this remained the disparities between pay rates paid by the increasing number of externally funded staff and consultants increasingly filling the ‘capacity gap’ in the civil service itself, and the growing army of aid workers in the community of NGOs that had expanded significantly within Afghanistan. Olsen (2006) estimated that by 2006 there were over 800 aid agencies operating in Afghanistan; competition for local staff between these agencies had driven up salary levels.

Further support to the idea that CSAR can be split into the three phases described above is proffered by the World Bank’s own Transitional Support Strategies (TSS) for Afghanistan, which were prepared for 2002–6, and Interim Strategy Notes (ISN) for 2006–8 and 2009–11.

As will be seen in the next section the implementation of P&G reform was much slower than expected. The perceived continued problems with ‘capacity’ prompted further engagements by donors who simply directed financial support to increasing numbers of national Externally Funded Staff (EFS) to work on an ever expanding number of projects and investments associated with the exceptional rise in donor expenditure post-2006, peaking in 2009, associated with the post-McChrystal civilian and military surge. These interventions were ad hoc, not coordinated with the IARCSC and resulted in a rapid expansion of what was becoming known as the ‘second civil service’⁵⁰.

As a response to this demand for increasing numbers of staff working on donor-funded projects, and with support from some donors such as the EU and DFID, the CSC expanded support for national and regional expertise through the Lateral Entry Programme (LEP), the Civilian Technical Assistance Programme (CTAP) and the Management Capacity Programme (MCP). These initiatives, endorsed by Presidential Decree, aimed to introduce

⁵⁰ Validation of this assertion is also apparent from the interviews analysed in chapter 5.

some consistency in both appointments and salary scales and were primarily aimed at developing the capacity of ministries and other governmental agencies and improving the participation of professional and experienced Afghans and regionally recruited experts in the reconstruction of the country. The World Bank (2011), however, noted in the CBR Project document⁵¹:

These programs had very limited scope, addressing only a small number of civil service functions. Overall, with a few notable improvements, capacity of most line ministries remains weak, and many line ministries continue to rely heavily on external consultant support.

The Bank suggested that low capacity remained the principal reason why development budget execution rates were so low across government, however there is no evidence produced to prove this other than low budget execution, which may be due to many factors including onerous WB procedures.

From 2009 onwards, government-wide pay and grading reform continued, combined with more ‘capacity building’ projects introduced by USAID (ABC) and UNDP (NIBDP), and the World-Bank-supported Civil Service Reform Project (CSRP). The latter project was approved in May 2007 to the value of \$20.4 million (see Table in Appendix A). It had three components including ‘Building HR Capacity and Organisational Restructuring in Line Ministries’ and ‘HR Policies and Regulations and Pay Reform, as well as ‘PAR Oversight and Monitoring’ working closely with the Commission. This project was completed on 31 July 2011 after an indifferent evaluation.

Despite the well-documented problems experienced in recent years with the expansion of EFS, in 2010 USAID belatedly attempted to introduce a massive injection of consulting support to the IARCSC. The \$84 million Afghanistan Civil Service Support (ACSS) project implemented by Deloitte 2010–2011 worked in the IARCSC and Afghanistan Civil Service Training Institute (ACSI). Deloitte had approximately 30–35 international advisers and 600–700 national advisers working in the IARCSC and ACSI at any one time. Support to staff training provided by the ACSI targeted over 16,000 public servants across the country, trained in five basic functions. Deloitte also focused on increased transparency and effectiveness of the Appointments and Appeals Boards; strengthening strategic

⁵¹ Drafted by World Bank officials but titled ‘Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Afghanistan Capacity Building for Results Facility (CBR)’ Proposal to the Management Committee – 13 December 2011, p.10.

communications; and other areas such as legislative drafting, improving business processes and updating IT systems. This USAID investment was a direct response to the McChrystal military and civilian ‘surge’. The relative success of all the programmes outlined above is reviewed in the next Section, 4.5.

Finally, and as a direct response to the previous failings with capacity development noted by the World Bank, the Commission and the Ministry of Finance, a major new project, again focusing on capacity building, and entitled ‘Capacity Building for Results’ (CBR), was brought forward in 2012; it attempted to address all the perceived key issues noted in previous evaluations in one project, including:

1. Capacity building.
2. Recruitment of managerial, common function and professional staff for key positions in selected line ministries and the reduction of externally funded staff.
3. An internship programme for new management.
4. Targeted training of civil servants; and
5. Project management, monitoring and evaluation.

Whilst dealing with many familiar problems the new project claimed to take a ‘new approach’ by supporting a gradual reduction of externally financed staff, with ‘incentives’ woven in based on whether the ministry has an approved Strategic Plan. Support to ministries is based on an institutional assessment of the Ministry (and a reform plan), to ensure a realistic budget and reform that is politically feasible. The project duration is five years: 2012–17. It is currently the only project of any significant value left to support the IARCSC. However, it appears the Commission has now been marginalised in its implementation, the project office being located in the Ministry of Finance. It is too early to assess whether CBR is indeed the new approach it claims to be. The project design however does include many components that look strikingly similar to the first attempt at reform and restructuring (PRR).

4.4 International Agreements, Plans, Conference Commitments

From 2001–2012 a number of international agreements, plans, conferences, commitments and conditionality have documented the international engagement in Afghanistan. The outputs/content of these offer clues as to the way the IC’s engagement, policy stances and priorities with the Afghan government has changed over time. Table 4.4 below looks at all

these major agreements, plans and commitments in terms of their contribution to building institutions, support for PAR and good governance generally.

Key Decision, Agreement, Plan, Conference	Outputs and Remarks
Resolution 1378 UN Security Council 14 December 2001	Resolution 1378 of the UNSC provides the framework for recovery and reconstruction efforts to buttress the political settlement. It specifically calls on member states to provide support for the administration and Government , including through the implementation of ‘quick-impact projects’.
Bonn Agreement (BA) – December 2001	<p>The BA was brokered by the UN. The intent was to provide a foundation for a political settlement and make provision for a transitional period and establishment of interim administration arrangements. IAI was established on 22 December 2001 and the first cabinet meeting took place on 23 December. The first Decree passed by the IAI cancelled all decrees and legal documents passed by previous authorities.</p> <p>The BA also authorised the AIA to establish an independent Civil Service Commission to provide the Interim Authority and the future Transitional Authority with shortlists of candidates for key posts in the administrative departments, as well as those of governors and uluswals.</p>
Tokyo Conference Jan. 2002 Endorsed by Conference Co-Chairs’ Summary of Conclusions of the Tokyo Conference. International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan	<p>The Conference top priority was re-establishing order and security in Afghanistan and the importance of meeting the government payroll to build the new administration.</p> <p>The AIA identified, <i>inter alia</i>, the following key priority – enhancement of administrative capacity, with emphasis on the payment of salaries and the establishment of the government administration. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was established.</p> <p>The conference noted a UNDP proposal for a Code of Conduct to avoid distortions in wages and rent inflation that might be caused by the presence of the IC.</p>
National Development Framework (NDF) – April 2002 A final version of the NDF was never published	<p>The NDF was intended to provide a long-term structure within which short-term and emergency interventions could be situated. It laid the foundations for statebuilding. It was operationalised through the National Development Budget and through the design and implementation of priority national programmes. It adopted a three pillar approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian and human and social capital • Physical reconstruction and natural resources • Private sector development <p>The NDF set out its vision of the “role of the State” (p.14). Public Administration is defined as a cross-cutting issue focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical infrastructure of government • Establishment of Capacity Building Groups in ministries and Civil Service College proposed • Establishment of the IARCSC • Technical assistance for financial management, and revenue service capacity building

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay differentials a key issue – first suggestion of problems with a parallel ‘second civil service’.
Afghanistan: Rebuilding our Nation – October 2002	<p>Brochure format presenting the NDF in a three pillar format broadly in line with the NDF. The document outlined 12 National Development Programmes and six National Priority Sub-Programmes.</p> <p>Public Administration is highlighted as a national programme. Focus is on physical infrastructure and capacity building.</p>
Securing Afghanistan’s Future (SAF) – 2004 (Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward)	<p>Another Govt/Inter-Agency Report. This exercise laid the analytic and policy foundations for the principal reconstruction tasks in the coming seven to 12 years. It defined the strategic goals of Afghanistan’s development. PAR was now linked to economic management.</p> <p>This is the first statement of the goal of a self-reliant Afghanistan with a renewed emphasis on economic growth. Also the first clear mention of potential problems being experienced with externally financed technical assistance.</p>
Berlin Declaration 2004 The International Conference on Afghanistan	<p>Strongly endorses the SAF and Government Work Plan. Makes commitment to stabilisation of the country and commits to five further Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The first PRT was established in Gardez in April 2003.</p>
Constitution of Afghanistan –2004	<p>The Constitution commits to the vision of a liberal, democratic Islamic Republic with full suffrage and respect for human rights. Envisages a strong centralised administration with little provision for decentralisation</p>
Millenium Development Goals Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Country Report 2005: Vision 2020	<p>This report, driven by UNAMA, chose to focus on Afghanistan and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) at a time when security in the country was rapidly deteriorating and peace and security were the top priorities.</p>
Afghanistan Compact (AC) ⁵² – 2006 Signed 31 January 2006 at the London Conference on Afghanistan	<p>The AC was an Agreement between Afghanistan and the IC on establishment and monitoring of benchmarks in security, governance, rule of law and human rights, economic and social development, and counter-narcotics. These were highlighted as the three critical and interdependent areas or pillars of activity for the five years from date of the adoption of the Compact.</p> <p>The AC commits all to strengthen state institutions and civil society. “The Afghan Government will give priority to the coordinated establishment in each province of functional institutions – including civil administration, police, prisons and judiciary. These institutions will have appropriate legal frameworks and appointment procedures; trained staff; and adequate remuneration, infrastructure and auditing capacity”. Public administration therefore is now immersed in an overall concept of “good governance”. However, for the first time specifies specific benchmarks for PAR – these included.</p>

⁵² Whilst there is no formal definition of the ‘Compact’ it is probably most accurate to describe it as a mutual framework for clear accountability between the partners. In this document, one partner, the Afghan Government, commits itself to agreeing a shared vision of the future with the IC. The other partner, the International Community, in turn commits itself to provide resources and support to realise that vision (p.2). Annexes set out detailed outcomes, benchmarks and timelines for delivery.

	<p>By end-2010: Government machinery (including the number of ministries) will be restructured and rationalised to ensure a fiscally sustainable public administration; the civil service commission will be strengthened; and civil service functions will be reformed to reflect core functions and responsibilities.</p> <p>A clear and transparent national appointments mechanism.</p> <p>By end-2006 a review of the number of administrative units and their boundaries will be undertaken with the aim of contributing to fiscal sustainability.</p> <p>By end-2010, in furtherance of the work of the civil service commission, merit-based appointments, vetting procedures and performance-based reviews will be undertaken for civil service positions at all levels of government, including central government, the judiciary and police, and requisite support will be provided to build the capacity of the civil service to function effectively. Annual performance-based reviews will be undertaken for all senior staff (grade 2 and above) starting by end-2007.</p> <p>Donors made specific commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance for the development of public expenditure management systems that are essential for improving transparency and accountability in the utilisation of donor resources and countering corruption; • Increasingly use Afghan national implementation partners and equally qualified local and expatriate Afghans. <p>The AC is the introduction of a National Compact to set out mutual commitments between the host country and the International Community.</p>
Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) – 2006	<p>The I-ANDS strategy document is the first comprehensive development strategy for Afghanistan. It served as an interim poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) and was prepared to ensure eligibility for debt forgiveness and concessional loans from the World Bank.</p> <p>Revised chapter headings now bring public administration into ‘Good Governance’ along with rule of law and human rights.</p>
Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) – 2008	<p>The completed ANDS designed to coordinate national development efforts through the Government and secure debt relief status for Afghanistan. Also functioned as a Poverty Reduction Strategy.</p> <p>Only three pages of the ANDS were devoted to Governance and the stated goal of PAR was: “Public administration reform will focus on pay and grading reforms to increase competitive recruitment, hiring of a trained and capable public sector workforce, strengthening merit-based appointments, and conducting performance-based reviews”.</p>
Paris Conference (2008) Declaration of the International Conference in	<p>The Conference conclusions note that “daunting challenges remain, especially in the areas of rule of law and law enforcement, government capacity, development, private sector growth, and the personal security of</p>

Support of Afghanistan	all Afghan citizens”, and state: “ We will give priority to strengthening institutions and economic growth, particularly in agriculture and energy”.
The Hague Conference Declaration (2009) Afghanistan Conference Final Declaration	<p>The Conference agreed to pursue a number of priority goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote good governance and stronger institutions • To generate economic growth • To strengthen security and promote regional cooperation. <p>Furthermore, the participants drew attention specifically for the first time to the need to strengthen Afghanistan’s national, provincial and local institutions. Donors and the government committed to provide adequate personnel and financial resources for ambitious nationwide programmes for training and technical assistance. Donors pledged to assist Afghan government institutions in promoting transparency, and increasing accountability and merit-based appointments, and to intensify the fight against corruption.</p>
London Conference on Afghanistan, (January, 2010) London Conference Communiqué: The London Conference: Afghan Leadership, Regional Cooperation, International Partnership	<p>Outcomes of the Conference re-emphasise Afghan Government accountability and announces the transfer of security to Afghan Government; also provides for new reconciliation and reintegration initiative to end conflict.</p> <p>Makes commitments “based on democratic accountability, equality, human rights, gender equality, good governance and more effective provision of government services, economic growth, as well as a common desire to live in peace under the Afghan Constitution”.</p> <p>The conference notes that economic growth, respect for Rule of Law and human rights alongside creation of employment opportunities, and good governance for all Afghans are critical to counter the appeal of the insurgency, as well as being vital to greater stability in Afghanistan.</p> <p>Para. 20 notes Conference Participants welcomed the Government of Afghanistan’s commitment to develop an overall plan for more effective and accountable national civilian institutions, including the civil service. They welcomed the Government of Afghanistan’s decision to approve the Sub-National Governance Policy and prepare implementing legislation in advance of the Kabul Conference.</p> <p>Conference Participants welcomed commitments made by the Government of Afghanistan and urged the IC to provide additional support to train 12,000 sub-national civil servants in core administrative functions in support of provincial and district governors by the end of 2011.</p> <p>Commits to putting 50% of donor aid on-budget and to align donor expenditure which requires a renewed focus on reforms to strengthen its PFM system systems, reduce corruption, improve budget execution, and increase revenue collection to finance the key National Priority Programmes (NPPs). Also pledges to align progressively donor development assistance behind the NPPs with the goal of achieving 80% of alignment within the next two years (known as the 50/80 commitment).</p>
Kabul Conference Communiqué, The Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan Kabul, July 2010	<p>The Kabul Conference introduced the ‘Kabul Process’ and attempted to specify and recommit to priorities for economic and social development, security, governance and reconciliation/reintegration.</p> <p>Also introduces the ‘whole of government’ approach. Para 2 notes: The Consultative Peace Jirga of June 2010 was an expression of national</p>

	<p>consensus and gave a mandate to adopt a ‘whole of the state’ approach and ‘whole of government’ path to national renewal. The essence of the ‘whole of the state’ is constitutionalism: to strengthen each of the three branches of the government and to reinforce the constitutional checks and balances that guarantee and enforce citizen rights and obligations. The essence of the ‘whole of government’ approach is structural reform to create an effective, accountable and transparent government that can deliver services to the population and safeguard national interests. Together, these complementary approaches, by putting people at the core, are key to stability and prosperity.</p> <p>The Conference notes (para. 6) that the Kabul process “recognises that the Afghan Government can guarantee security only when its people are confident in its ability to deliver public services, good governance, human rights protection including gender equality, and economic opportunities”. Reaffirms commitment to the 50/80 goal.</p> <p>Para. 9 notes “Good governance, the rule of law, and human rights form the foundation of the strategy to achieve a stable and prosperous Afghanistan”.</p> <p>Specific commitment to reform with regard to CSAR is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen civil service reform by enhancing complementarity between the Afghan Civilian Technical Assistance Programme (CTAP) and the Management Capacity Programme (MCP) in 12 months (which led eventually to preparation of the CBR programme); • Seek an understanding with donors...on a harmonised salary scale for donor-funded salaries of persons working within the Afghan Government (to deal with the second civil service issue). <p>In addition, the overall emphasis remained on anti-corruption measures and pledges to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and implement a standardised methodology to assess PFM of line ministries; • Implement over the next 12 months, in a phased and fiscally sustainable manner, the Sub-National Governance Policy, and strengthen local institutional capacity, including training of civil servants and development of training curricula, and develop sub-national regulatory, financing, and budgetary frameworks.
<p>Bonn Conference Communiqué: The Second International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn 5 December 2011 Afghanistan and the International Community: From Transition to the Transformation Decade</p>	<p>A Conference mainly concerned with security, confirming that the process of ‘Transition’ is well underway and is endorsed again, emphasising a deep and broadening partnership between Afghanistan and the IC.</p> <p>Para. 8 is concerned again with governance and states: <i>“We recognise that building a democratic society above all entails enabling legitimate and effective civilian authority embodied in a democratically <i>elected government</i> and served by transparent and strong, functioning institutions. Despite significant achievements, Afghanistan needs to continue its work to strengthen state institutions and improve governance throughout the country, including through reforming the civil service and strengthening</i></p>

	<p>the linkage between justice reform and development of its security institutions, including an effective civilian police force.</p> <p>Para. 32 emphasises that Afghanistan reiterates its commitment to continue to improve governance, while the IC commits to an enduring engagement with Afghanistan through and beyond 2014.</p>
The Chicago Summit May 2012	Summit of NATO countries dealing with all current NATO challenges. With regard to Afghanistan: establishes the end of 2014 as the date when the Afghan Authorities will have full security responsibility and the NATO-led combat mission will end. Reiterates the Bonn Conference 2011 commitments.
<p>Tokyo Conference The Tokyo Declaration: Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan. From Transition to Transformation 8 July 2012</p>	<p>This conference produced two key documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tokyo Declaration • Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF), an annex to the Declaration. <p>The Declaration reaffirms and further consolidates the partnership from Transition to the Transformation Decade. Mentions the peace and reconciliation process commitments. Para. 11 notes “the participants recognised that good governance at national and sub-national levels is essential for strong and sustainable economic development and improved livelihoods of the Afghan people”. The Declaration reaffirms the 50/80 commitment, action on anti-corruption, economic development and regional cooperation. The TMAF is an attempt to concretise the mutual commitments decided in the London Conference, the Kabul Process and reaffirmed at the Bonn Conference by stipulating shared development and governance goals and a mechanism as described in this document to hold parties accountable for achieving them (para. 2). With regard to governance, this is again consolidated with human rights and rule of law. With regard to CSAR the goal is to “improve the capacity of state institutions”. None of the indicators relate to CSAR except at the periphery; all senior public sectors officials must produce annual asset declarations. The integrity of public finance and banking is again highlighted with a number of actions to consolidate the integrity of public finance. In addition government revenues and budget are addressed, with a specific goal to “improve the Afghan Government’s revenue collection and capacity of line Ministries to develop and execute budgets accountable to, and incorporating, local needs and preferences”. Lastly, the TMAF agrees to clarify the legal framework for sub national governance (SNG), and SNG planning and budgeting.</p>
<p>Tokyo Conference Follow Up – Senior Officials Meeting Kabul 2 July 2013</p>	The IC and the Afghan Government met to reaffirm and further consolidate their partnership from Transition to the Transformation Decade. There were three working group sessions on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights (with a particular focus on the rights of women and girls); the meeting also focused on the Integrity of Public Finance and Commercial Banking; Government Revenues, Budget Execution and Sub-National Governance; and Inclusive and Sustained Growth and Development.

Table 4.4 Key International Agreements and National-Level Policies and Commitments to PAR in the Post-Taliban Period

Source G. J. Wilson, Cranfield University.

Noting the contents of Section 4.3, and tracking these international agreements, plans and strategies, a number of key points emerge:

- From 2002 the initial focus and activities were part of what might be termed a predictable, ‘regular’ normative civil service and administrative reform agenda, an agenda that reflected current international ‘best practice’ as noted in the literature review and immediately coterminous interventions in post-conflict Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor. The new Government in Afghanistan was intended to be a fresh start and would not replicate the style and set up of previous governments. A key early focus was to set up the budget and treasury systems, and establish a civil service commission to promote merit-based recruitment. However, the first major early key reform approach, Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR), adopted a deliberately ‘asymmetric’ approach, described in more detail below in Section 4.5.
- There were relatively simple national development frameworks in the early years with a limited number of national programmes, one of which was dedicated to public administration. There is a modest influence of security concerns on the overall development strategy and programmes in the first four years.
- From 2002 to 2006 there was a clear focus and consistent approach to building basic administration, albeit with a strong focus on central-level institutions. However, due to the limited progress on reforms, as shall be seen in Section 4.5 below, by 2006 the first ‘Compact’ was signed, setting out specific benchmarks, targets and deadlines for the first time, including for public administration. This ‘Compact’ was hopelessly optimistic in the targets it set – Afghanistan was already bound to fail to reach the targets; the seeds of over-optimism were planted.
- The signing of the first ‘Compact’ in 2006 coincides with the recognition of what was a clearly deteriorating security situation that necessitated the scaling up of international intervention by foreign security forces, and an attempt to inject a sense of urgency in dealing with the key statebuilding and issues. The problems in Afghanistan mirrored contemporary experiences in Iraq. ‘Stabilisation’ emerges as an approach backed up by its own guidance on meaning and application.
- After 2006, there is a growing emphasis on ‘good governance’ and the subsuming of public administration, and particularly civil service and administrative reform, into the

overall concept of ‘good governance’. Post-2008, the details of PAR and its specific components fall away and subsequent documentation focuses primarily on general commitments to improving ‘governance’, and particularly dealing with corruption.

- Post-2006 public finance management is also separated out from the rest of the PAR agenda and is relocated into ‘economic governance’. This then coincides with an increasing emphasis on PFM as being central to increasing budget execution, fiscal sustainability, procurement that is free from corruption, increasing revenue collection, and improving service delivery. Improved PFM, economic growth and ‘good governance’ are now synonymous with the underpinning of security and a stable Afghanistan.
- The Kabul Conference in 2010 introduces the ‘whole of government’ approach, an approach that the IC has just adopted for itself, in the belief that simply by coordinating better, improved results will come. However, this is undermined by an erroneous assumption that others are all adopting a similar approach. General notions about ‘good governance’ are highlighted in a single conference paper with CSAR buried deep in the overarching text.
- By 2011, the Bonn Conference, and then the Tokyo Conference Declaration in 2012 (and the contents of the TMAF) are focused on the ongoing ‘transition’ and the need to make rapid progress on a few key and ‘top priority’ issues before the international security force leaves Afghanistan. The only areas of public administration deemed a continued priority are now public finance management, the fight against corruption (notably large-scale corruption at the top as exemplified by the Kabul Bank crisis) and clarity over the legal framework for sub-national governance. Concern has now switched to credible elections, human rights and economic development.
- In 2013, at the Senior Officials Meeting follow-up to the Tokyo Conference, the focus remains solely on ‘governance’, rule of law and human rights (with a particular focus on the rights of women and girls), public finance and commercial banking, revenues, budget execution and sub-national governance and growth and development.

Post-2006 the international meetings therefore became more frequent, almost annual, and the text of Agreements is longer and more detailed in terms of the demands of the IC, as frustration with lack of progress encourages the IC to spell out exactly what is required and

by when. The endless meetings and the need for ‘commitments’ have attracted criticism from some quarters. William Byrd (2012), in a USIP publication, identifies not just ‘meeting fatigue’ as an issue, but the endless, hopelessly over-optimistic agendas and demands:

The meetings often have raised excessive expectations; lacked meaningful follow-up; undermined their own objectives; prioritized diplomacy over substance; focused more on donors’ issues than Afghan problems; oriented the Afghan government toward donors; diverted resources toward meetings; resulted in meeting fatigue; and sometimes seemingly substituted for action .

The major emerging themes in the above thread are ‘capacity building’ and ‘governance’ – notional priorities that have demonstrated little capacity to actually deliver as shall be discussed further in Section 4.5 below; the initial approaches to CSAR are examined in greater detail.

4.5 Civil Service and Administrative Reform Results, Outcomes and Achievements

4.5.1 CSAR Aid Statistics 2001–12

This section commences with an attempt to identify exactly how much financial support has been allocated for CSAR. The financial statistics of how much aid money has been devoted to civil service and administrative reform are complex and difficult to pinpoint. This is due to a number of factors that can be broken down into three key areas:

1. Understanding Afghanistan’s aid statistics generally.
2. Recording project information in the Development Assistance Database (DAD).
3. Classifying projects into the various sub-components of public administration reform.

Understanding aid statistics generally

Understanding the aid budget generally is vitally important to understanding investments in CSAR and PAR more widely. The MoF Aid Management Policy notes:

Since 2002, almost the entire Development Budget and, on average, up to approximately 52% of the Operating Budget of Afghanistan has been financed by foreign aid. A total of US\$90 billion has been pledged in external assistance (2002–2013), of which US\$69 billion has been committed (2002–2011) and US\$57 billion disbursed (2002–2010)(GIRoA 2013a, p.33).

All financial resources required to underpin reform come from the development community. In the early years, aid statistics were compiled and monitored by the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA), a public body established by Decree dated 1 April 2002. The AACA was responsible for the overall management of assistance to Afghanistan. The aid data prepared by the AACA was compiled on spreadsheets for some years, originally known as the ‘Donor Assistance Database’. In 2005, with UNDP support, the MoF acquired the DAD, a widely used Aid Information Management System (AIMS) developed by Synergy International Systems, Inc. for aid management, public investment and national budgeting. Between 2005 and 2007 the original spreadsheet records were migrated onto the DAD. In the process of transfer, many records were lost, data was discovered to be inconsistent, and there were multiple cases of duplication. ‘Harmonised Reporting Forms’ were developed to try to deal with these problems, but these were eventually dropped and donors now enter data directly⁵³.

Recording project information in the Development Assistance Database (DAD)

The MoF continues to utilise the Development Assistance Database (DAD) as the official repository of aid information and the dedicated tool for aid accounting and reporting. DPs are requested to provide information on the allocation and use of their aid on a regular basis and are required to update the DAD with their own information. The DAD was set up specifically to support, coordinate and track aid expenditure in order to improve aid effectiveness. However, on release, the take up of DAD was poor. The MoF undertook a survey of donors in 2012 and found that many were still reluctant to use the system because they viewed it as follows:

- Unnecessarily complex;
- Insufficient commitment across all other DPs to using the system;
- Difficulties in obtaining technical support when problems were encountered;
- Some DP staff were not authorised by their organisation to use the DAD;
- Some DPs saw ‘legal problems’ in using the DAD; and

⁵³ Based on personal correspondence with the project officer employed on the data transfer exercise.

- A number of DPs have to use their own internal aid management systems and reported that the DAD simply represented additional work for them.

In 2011, the MoF, with technical support, overhauled the DAD, simplifying its set-up⁵⁴. The old system had seven screens for data entry and it took 20 minutes to enter a project. There was no help desk for donors experiencing problems and little documentation available for support. In the early days there was no written policy on DAD use⁵⁵. Since 2011, significant improvements to the database have included:

- One screen for data entry – it now takes four minutes to enter a project.
- A comprehensive online help system accessible from the data entry screens.
- Establishment of a help desk to log requests for support.
- Checklists to help DPs establish an enabling environment in their organisations for use of the DAD.
- Clear policy on use of the DAD.

Upgrading the system is a project in its own right and there were subsequent delays in securing funding for the upgrade of the system. Until the new Aid Management Policy (AMP) was drafted and subsequently agreed with donors in early 2013 (GIRoA, 2013a), there was no policy that clearly ‘required’ DPs to provide the requisite information along with some sort of enforcement mechanism. Even with the policy it is evident that there is a continued lack of will with some key donors to provide the information. In addition, the donors are on record as stating that the AMP is not legally binding for them and they have rejected any suggestion that they must comply with all policies.

The only method left open to the MoF in order to make progress on the issue is increased communications with donors and constant follow-up to try to increase compliance.

Unfortunately if aid information is not in the DAD, the Government will be unable to recognise Official Development Assistance (ODA) and will be less able to account for the aid

⁵⁴ Based on personal correspondence with Head of DAD in the MoF, March 2013. The survey of donors in 2012 included one-on-one interviews with DPs and interviews with each of the donor focal points in the Aid Coordination Unit (ACU).

⁵⁵ Personal correspondence from the Head of Section in MoF, endorsed by the Chief Technical Adviser from Adam Smith International.

money spent in Afghanistan. In summary, 12 years after the reconstruction effort started in Afghanistan no one is required to provide information on what donor funds are used for.

Classifying projects into the various sub-components of public administration reform

As noted in Chapter 1, PAR can be broken down into four basic components: civil service reform, administrative reform, public finance management and policy management reform. Unfortunately the distinction is not clear-cut and there are overlaps between the sub-components. The DAD classification system is based on the ANDS pillars and therefore lists PAR projects under more than one combination of Pillar / Sub-Pillar / Sector / Sub-Sector descriptors. A request to identify CSAR projects, therefore, generates a long list of projects clustered around all elements of PAR (except PFM) mixed in with general ‘governance’ and human rights projects. In sum, if it was required to construct an accurate list of projects related only to the generally agreed definition of PAR and broken down by sub-components – it would be impossible to achieve. Interestingly, this is not the case for Public Finance Management which has its own ‘category’, despite being a governance issue.

The preparation of aid statistics for CSAR therefore has to be done by hand and requires exercise of judgment as to whether a project is counted or not. Many projects that are listed under health and education, for example, may contain a significant element of civil service and administrative reform. With so many aid projects it is virtually impossible to identify the amount of support provided. Since 2002, the DAD has recorded nearly 2000 projects on-budget and more than 4500 projects⁵⁶ off-budget. This figure still substantially under-records the number due to the problems described above.

The sums allocated and spent on CSAR through the IARCSC and on the main capacity building initiatives (excluding CBR) are approximately \$200 million (see Appendix A). This excludes sums allocated directly on projects in individual line ministries. Most of the sum allocated was spent off-budget⁵⁷. In 2013 approximately 70–80% of funds were still spent off-budget with all the problems associated with off-budget expenditure (GIROAb 2013).

⁵⁶ Figure provide by Head of DAD, MoF, 1 April 2013.

⁵⁷ The Government defines ‘on-budget’ as follows: “Assistance is qualified as on budget when the funds are delivered using the government Public Financial Management (PFM) system (i.e. budget, treasury, audit and procurement). This includes both general budget support (which is discretionary for use by GIROA) and also non-discretionary (or ‘earmarked’) assistance” (GIROA 2013a).

4.5.2 Multilateral and Bilateral Programme Evaluations, Project Assessments, Reviews and Evaluations

Multilateral Evaluations

Perhaps due to the approaching transition post-2014, when most of the foreign troops will leave Afghanistan, many donor governments have taken the opportunity to commission evaluations of their respective programmes. Evaluations have been undertaken by donors including Denmark (2012), DFID (2009), Germany (undated – but probably 2011), Canada (2012), ICAI (2012), NORAD (2012) and the US (2011). An independent evaluation of the overall international effort between 2002 and 2012 has not been completed and is unlikely to be done. A number of multilateral organisations have also undertaken evaluations or assessments. They include UNDP (2009), the ADB (2012), IEG (2012) and the World Bank (2012).

The results of these evaluations are understandably wide-ranging. Wilson (2013, p.1) notes:

Most evaluations conclude that a lot has been accomplished. But they also point to substantial deficiencies that have marred programme effectiveness. In summary, the evaluations point to the need for much sharper focus in future on a few of the overarching issues and priorities rather than continuing a large and scattered donor effort.

The evaluations suggest that Afghanistan is decidedly better off than it was before 2002. Output indicators in virtually every sector have improved dramatically, including primary health, basic education, power supplies, transport, irrigation, and community development. All donor evaluations consider their respective activities to have been relevant or highly relevant based on their alignment with the Government's plans and priorities (Wilson, 2013, p.6). Conversely, the Government and civil society give low to moderate scores for alignment to government priorities based on the view that the Government's development plan (ANDS) is by its nature all-encompassing and thus any donor initiative can be considered aligned to it. It concludes that:

Many donors continue to follow their own agendas while claiming they are aligned with Afghan government priorities" (GIROA, 2010a, p.16).

The evaluations are also unanimous in concluding that delivering aid in Afghanistan is particularly expensive, with high administration costs, additional security and life support costs and overheads, implementation delays and sometimes complex subcontracting arrangements. The reports also note that it has been extremely difficult for technical personnel to do their work due to the insecurity. Anecdotally, and in support of the observations, the difficulties of this are only too apparent as noted in the comments of Boak (2011) in the *Washington Post* on the military–civilian surge in Afghanistan:

Meanwhile, many of the U.S. experts deployed as part of a ‘civilian surge’ to help strengthen local government remain hunkered down in the capital, Kabul, removed from the front lines where they are most needed. ‘For a lot of reasons, the “civilian surge” never amounted to what it was claimed to be,’ said a U.S. civilian adviser based in southern Afghanistan, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. ‘Security rules that restrict movement and access have gotten tighter and are making it increasingly difficult for people to do their jobs, wherever they are located.

Additionally, the evaluations all raised serious concerns with the sustainability of programmes and projects. The primary concerns are the sustainability of public finances to meet the resulting operations and management costs and the ability of the Government to pay for the so-called ‘second civil service’. These concerns are understandable looking back to the figures collated and shown in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. The biggest criticism is the problems created with the second civil service. The World Bank IEG evaluation estimates more than 5000 Afghan civil servants function as a “second civil service” whose enhanced pay is more than 11 times the highest rate for the civil service (IEG 2012, p.180). This figure is, however, a serious underestimate as can be seen from the MoF’s own survey in 2010, referred to below.

The problems with the provision of technical assistance are also picked up by the ADB (2012), who note:

Design of TA projects was weak and not appropriate to develop sustainable human resource capacity. The focus was on direct training, international consultants, and use of project implementation units; there was little focus on strengthening local training institutions. Training efforts were constrained by language difficulties.

They go on to point out that:

accountability of international advisors was also vague with some of them reporting directly to ADB, diminishing government ownership (ADB 2012, p.44).

NORAD (2012, p.15) points out that there was no clear strategy from the donors . DFID (2009, p.4) notes

Progress towards the objective of capacity at central and local levels with strengthened links between them has been limited.

The overriding impression from the multilateral and bilateral assessments is that neither the donors nor the Government has a clear understanding and strategy and consolidated picture of what is required for building state capacity, and thus one of the central objectives of the overall intervention, strengthening and building state institutions, has not been achieved. Furthermore, nearly all the multilateral and bilateral evaluations point to the continuing and rising level of corruption that undermines both development efforts and citizens' confidence in their Government. The evaluations all cite corruption as a major challenge. Data on public perception also shows limitations in trust towards the state as a consequence of growing corruption (Asia Foundation, 2010). Endorsing the evaluations' view is evidence from two other studies that consolidate Afghanistan's rising reputation as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, (Transparency International, 2012; Integrity Watch, 2012).

In terms of outcomes in the field of public administration, the only area singled out for specific endorsement is PFM. After ten years of support, the World Bank claims that

Afghanistan's PFM framework is better than would be expected for a country of this per capita income that started virtually from scratch ten years ago (IEG 2012, p.31).

DFID (2009, p.3) suggests that a major success is that a merit-based system of civil service appointments is now in place, an interesting conclusion that has absolutely no foundation in reality following detailed analysis of relevant project and programme evaluations. The Afghan Government's own assessment is that nepotism is still widespread (GIRoA, 2010, p.21).

Whilst useful in terms of appraising overall achievements at the macro level, these countrywide, agency-wide evaluations provide only general conclusions about the impact of CSAR. In order to obtain more detail it is necessary to go into the projects themselves.

CSAR Evaluations, Assessments and Progress Reports of Projects

No official independent evaluation of PRR or indeed any of the earliest IARCSC projects was ever made so it is not possible to accurately assess the performance of the initial interventions based on official evaluations; instead, the interviews summarised in chapter 6 attempt to delve deeper into this. The lack of formal evaluations of the first interventions between 2002 and 2005 is one of the key findings of this research. Interview findings in Chapter 6 conclude that this was partly a result of the high speed of work of the technical teams in the early years, a rapidly evolving reform agenda and the lack of staff presence of the donors themselves.

Looking backwards at the experience of the first five years of reform in Afghanistan, William Byrd (2007), ex-country-manager of the World Bank in Afghanistan during this period, noted:

In public sector management and governance, the greatest progress has been made in public finance management (PFM), including revenue mobilization and other budgetary trends as well as major improvements in the whole range of PFM processes and systems; however, these achievements have been based to a considerable extent on injection of temporary external capacity, so the challenge will be to maintain standards and make further improvements while shifting to sustainable core national capacity over time. In public administration reform (PAR) performance has been considerably weaker than in the case of PFM. The experience with the asymmetric Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) program has been mixed, with initially good results in some ministries and agencies but significant problems encountered—the mandated restructuring in many cases was only pro forma, and merit-based selection for positions frequently was observed in the breach. More recently the focus in PAR has shifted toward more comprehensive civil service reforms, including most notably pay and grading reform which would raise and sharply decompress pay levels for civil service positions, based on qualifications.

Evaluation of support by the EC to public administration reform in Afghanistan from 2004–9 reveals a long line of failures, inappropriate project design and poor outcomes

(ASI, 2011). Adam Smith International (ASI) note the constraints on time imposed by a 'stabilisation' environment; the politicisation of the public service; problems with donor coordination; and the presence of large numbers of donors and international organisations who distort the labour market in the short to medium term (p.9). The evaluation also uncovered, in a series of key personnel interviews and focus group discussions, that donors themselves have serious difficulties in managing CSAR projects and in particular struggle to understand the implications of their own creed of 'Afghan-led development'.

The EU's first intervention in the IARCSC did not start until 2004. Bollinger (2006), reflecting on the completion of this first EU intervention into support for CSAR, notes a number of activities that were cancelled due to problems with EU regulations not being followed, problems with employment of Afghans in the IARCSC (over 100 staff), and problems with attracting and appointing international technical staff. The Final Report of the EC project to Support Recruitment of a Team of European Consultants for Public Administration Reform in Afghanistan Service Contract No. ASIA/2007/17064/134014 contained a comprehensive critique of their experiences in the IARCSC and in summary noted:

We can be strong in our opinion, having witnessed during recent months an increasing hostile and threatening reception by the IARCSC Civil Service Management Department (CSMD) management, that the EC should avoid further support to the IARCSC as it is evidently clear that current management has alternative motives avoiding effective and sustainable reform in a transparent and professional manner ... it is evident that through the presence of the ANDS and the sector strategies that the mandate of the IARCSC is clear and unambiguous.

Heinz (2009) reviewed the UNDP support to the IARCS to develop Civil Service Leadership Programmes; she concluded:

It is impossible to measure the magnitude of performance, behaviour and attitude change, however, because these measurements were never taken. The two previous project evaluations identified this issue, but were not acted upon.

She also noted that, with regard to human capital capacity building, the project performed poorly, failing to produce the intended large pool of trainers. She concluded that communication and underlying processes between the project and the ACSI were so weak that the ACSI and CSLD ended up producing parallel training programmes.

In a rare positive observation, Gibbons (2009), evaluating the Capacity for Afghan Public Service Project (CAP), concludes that the project made a unique contribution to the building of capacity within the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) at both the national and sub-national levels. Gibbons claimed the approach:

Broke the mould of traditional technical assistance delivery by adopting a very different approach which has taken capacity development out of the textbooks and lecture halls and into the workplace.

The project utilised a coaching and mentoring approach as opposed to capacity ‘substitution’, which, whilst difficult to evaluate, offered some alternative ideas to deliver capacity development projects.

The World Bank CSRP evaluation of three project components noted that by October 2010 only 50% of the funds had been disbursed, due partially to ‘implementation issues’. The overall evaluation noted performance on the project was ‘moderately unsatisfactory’ (World Bank, 2010). The mid-term review did not consider the performance of the third component. The project was designed to support the rollout of pay and grading in ministries, partly through helping to establish new Reform Implementation Management Units (RIMUs). However, the evaluation noted:

Most RIMUs do not act as a high level reform unit under the leadership of a Minister or Deputy Minister. Many are initially viewed with suspicion by HR staff. There is little evidence of linkages with broader ministry reform initiatives and priorities (World Bank, 2010, p.2).

The evaluation also pointed to significant weaknesses in the civil service law and accompanying regulations. Whilst the CSRP project had helped implement new simplified recruitment procedures with additional third-party oversight, the evaluation noted that perceptions of patronage and corruption in appointments continued. In the light of the outcomes and emerging plans to prepare the major CBR project it was decided to conclude the project in 2011. As a postscript to the accuracy of some evaluations, it may be noted that, in a response to the World Bank CSRP Evaluation, the implementing partner, an international consulting firm (PAI 2010), provided the following statement:

We feel the report itself is of poor quality. It includes inaccuracies, misconceptions and incomplete or incorrect information. Its logic is flawed; it lacks meaningful conclusions, and makes unsupported assumptions often without factual evidence and/or current examples, and it contains only broad generalizations for improving or addressing the alleged weaknesses and criticisms.

The response goes on:

Fails to address the question of why there has been no effective WB oversight of the CSRP implementation. In our view, there has been a serious lack of strategic vision as to the direction of the PAR process. Nowhere does the MTR report criticise CSMD's lack of vision or plan and neither is there any indication as to where and how the CSRP Components should support the overall reform process. Just as importantly, there is no effective communication strategy to underpin the reforms and secure support for their implementation.

Perhaps accepting some of the previous criticisms, the World Bank looking back over the years between 2007 and 2012 at the programmes and projects in the IARCSC concluded:

Although these reforms have resulted in some positive outcomes, they have not resulted in the development of sustainable civil service capacity, even factoring in that building human and institutional capacity takes time. The costly technical assistance and capacity building initiatives have been supply driven, loosely connected, uncoordinated and largely unaligned to supporting a ministry's budget execution and service delivery targets. Reforms have overall had little impact on the functioning of the provincial and district offices of line ministries. Services that are being delivered are largely coordinated by the 'second civil service' – national project staff and civil servants receiving salary top-ups, both in management and sector specific professional skills⁵⁸.

Checchi and Co (2011) prepared the final report on the largest CSAR intervention in US dollar terms within the IARCSC. They noted USAID's intention to shift to an 'Afghan-led' approach to project implementation as a means of empowerment and indigenisation of control over development expenditure. However, operationalising the concept proved to be difficult. Checchi and Co concluded that as a result of this there were problems with compliance with procedures leading to serious disagreements, and poor inexperienced Afghan management.

⁵⁸ World Bank (2011), accessed 29 March 2013 at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/EXTSAREGTOPPRISECDEV/0,,contentMDK:20584869~menuPK:496677~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:496671,00.html>.

The report notes that:

Because so many CSC staff were on the project's payroll it was difficult to clearly differentiate ACSS impacts from the performance of the Commission as a whole.

Ongoing problems with appointments and 'favouritism' were also cited again. The report provided more than 20 recommendations to improve future interventions, including reactivation of the 'lost' Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) that ceased activities in August 2004.

Ongoing problems with the appointments procedures are mentioned across nearly all of the evaluations. A World Bank (2007d) Report drew attention to the slow progress in making merit-based appointments in Afghanistan. A World Bank (2008) Report had again identified continued pressure with political appointments as a serious issue for the Government to tackle. Lister (2006), in an AREU publication, notes the following issues with attempting to apply meritocratic standards in the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Afghanistan. She frames the discussion by noting that MoH was generally viewed as a 'poster child for public sector reform and capacity building'. She identifies the following concerns:

The overall lack of political commitment to the reform process, the corruption of the Lateral Entry Programme. Some individuals have allegedly been hiring their friends and relatives through this programme. The continued patronage networks. Effects of this have included the resignation of a qualified staff member brought in through the PRR process who did not have the necessary support from powerful people within the ministry. The continued training and 'capacity building' of individuals who are never going to have the capacity to carry out their jobs adequately. The growth of some departments as a result of PRR beyond the extent planned. This is caused by continued pressures to hire unqualified staff, or, in the absence of a severance package, by the need to accommodate those who did not successfully compete for a PRR post.

Five years later, AREU (2011), in its comprehensive research programme into local governance in 47 districts of Afghanistan, reported:

High levels of malpractice related to the recruitment of civil servants remains the norm rather than the exception ... Corruption is an ever present issue that extends throughout local government structures, often to the highest positions. Rent taking

occurs at every opportunity and the influence of powerholders and patronage networks remains pervasive (AREU 2011, p.1).

Problems with recruitment are cited by ministries also. The perception of nepotism emanating from the IARCS is demonstrated by the IDLG seeking major changes to the recruitment of district governors in May 2012, where they succeeded in reducing the number of IARCSC Appointments Board members sitting on staff interviews.

Moreover, and unnoticed by the evaluations mentioned above, all the municipalities in Afghanistan were passed over by the major capacity development, pay and grading and institutional development programmes. The PAR programmes of IARCSC were only recently launched in a first municipality, Kandahar City, in 2012. The new ‘pay and grading’ system has not been rolled out fully at all⁵⁹.

Despite the significant investments in HR processes and years of attention to the pay and grading reforms, in 2013, even relatively ‘high-performing’ ministries such as the MoF still have significant general problems with personnel policies, procedures and human resource management issues. Ernst and Young (2013, p.100) noted for MoF:

- *The lack of automated attendance systems at provincial offices.*
- *No succession planning in place.*
- *Job Descriptions (JDs) are not signed by the employees.*
- *No reference checks for nongovernmental employees.*
- *Lack of controls over maintenance of employee files.*
- *Training and Development Plan is not prepared taking into consideration annual appraisals.*
- *No formal documentation of exit interviews.*

⁵⁹ The IDLG NPP3 has attempted to identify why progress in municipalities has been so slow. They point to compromised municipal governance due to the lack of inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes, the fact that there have been no mayoral elections and municipal council elections at all, the lack of a suitable legal framework, the old Taliban Law still being in use, and municipalities still receiving no budget from the state.

- *Health and safety plan not implemented.*

Key MoF departments such as the Budget and Treasury Directorates are still largely staffed by externally funded persons. In 2013 more than 80% of the Budget staff are still paid for by donor project finance⁶⁰.

Successive poor evaluations, a perception of poor leadership and the Chairman of the IARCSC not sitting in Cabinet, and a lack of coordination and cooperation with donors has led to donors turning away from the IARCSC. The clearest and most recent demonstration of this is the placement of the US\$100 million CBR project HQ in the MoF. Whilst notionally there is a single agency, the IARCSC having formal responsibility for managing the public service, there is still a strong tendency for each ministry, institution or organisation to manage its resources differently and for its own interests, often bypassing the Commission. The legislative and regulatory framework for public administration is weak and often ignored, and impedes effectiveness, and it creates extra opportunities for rent seeking and corruption. The IARCSC and IDLG are often misunderstood in terms of mandate and responsibilities.

Growing problems with the parallel or ‘second civil service’

The first specific mention of the potential problems being caused by the uncontrolled growth of the so-called ‘second civil service’ was in the joint Government–World Bank document ‘Securing Afghanistan’s Future’ (GIRoA, 2004a). The report noted:

A major challenge is the existence of a second public sector, comprising the national staff of donor Governments, international agencies, and NGOs who are involved in traditional Government work ... this second public service draws a large number of the most talented candidates from the civil service pool by offering higher wages and better conditions. Until progress is made in resolving this systemic issue there will be major difficulties in building the best possible public administration (p.59).

⁶⁰ Confirmed through discussions with DG Budget and the staffing profile of the UNDP Project, ‘Making Budgets and Aid Work’.

Donors had thus been aware of potential issues with increasing salaries for externally funded staff for a number of years. The issue was raised in almost all project evaluation and then heightened significantly with the publication of a World Bank Paper published in October 2009: 'Scaling up Technical Assistance and Capacity Development in Afghanistan'. The paper highlighted the continued poor practices in NTA usage including high salaries, multiplicity of salary scales and failure to transfer skills to tashkeel staff. Attempts to address the issue escalated with Presidential Decree No. 636 in January 2010, instructing the MoF, the OAA and IARCSC to identify the full extent of salary support and propose a mechanism to harmonise and increase government control. This Decree ultimately led to a joint MoF/IARCSC survey of NTA. The survey revealed that monthly remuneration (including salary or top-up) for current recipients ranges from \$20 to \$9,000, with an average of \$564. However, 68% receive no more than the average and 10% receive \$1500 or more (up to \$9000). Monthly salary presents a very similar pattern, ranging from \$75 to \$9000, with an average of \$734. However, 65% receive no more than the average and only 10% receive \$1677 or more. The report also noted that:

When controlled for grades, donor-funded salaries are generally 3–8 times the Pay and Grading Scheme the government is currently implementing, with the multiplier increasing as the grade goes up. More than 8000 staff were estimated to be on a variety of pay scales in 38 different state institutions (GIROA, 2010a, pp.2–5).

The figures do not seem to follow any particular pattern, with 71 international advisers in the Ministry of Finance and only one in the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA). Despite the apparent concerns of the IFIs, donors and the Government, nearly ten years after first being raised the current situation is still highly problematic. The current pay scales still consist of:

1. Unreformed salaries at an extremely low level – application across government unknown.
2. Reformed – those staff who have undergone 'Pay and Grading'.
3. The Miscellaneous salary scales from a multitude of donors and government schemes (at least five separate schemes).
4. The new scales approved by Cabinet on April 8 2013.

Table 4.5, compiled by the World Bank, partially illustrates the problem, the estimated numbers involved and the distribution across ministries. It does not include CTAP consultants, pay and grading ‘reformed’ staff, salary top-ups across government or bilateral assistance.

Priority Reform & Restructuring	Interim Additional Allowances (IAA)	\$80-\$235 per month	Currently 31,000 staff
PRR Superscale	Allowance to exceptionally well qualified staff.	\$300-\$2000 per month	1786 positions in approx 26 ministries
Presidential Awards	Awards made to individuals on Presidential order.	\$2000-\$12,500 per month	Currently 117 positions
Management Capacity Programme	Consultants in line positions in core functions for 2–3 years.	\$1000-\$7500 per month	70–75 positions in 12 ministries

Table 4.5 Various Pay Scales Evident in 2009

Source: Adapted from World Bank (2009).

Ad hoc and multiple arrangements for extra payments to local Afghan civil servants are simply too numerous to collate. As recently as 2013, and revealed as unknown to the IARCSC, the UK Government noted (Hague, 2013):

In Uruzgan, allowances will be paid to 600 school staff, including teachers, to allow them to operate in remote and insecure areas.

The variety of schemes mean that it is impossible to maintain consistency in terms of competitiveness of remuneration and keep the workforce stable and motivated, quite apart from issues of equity. In the circumstances it is harder to attract and retain some types of qualified staff. The issues have been recognised by the MoF in their latest attempt to agree a strategy to deal with the problem. In the cabinet submission requesting approval for new Salary Guidelines for National Technical Advisers, they note:

The Government launched the P&G System and it has caused substantial consistency in the pay system of the civil servants, but due to the changing living cost with non-sufficient and stable salaries of civil servants and due to low financial ability of the government, and lack of proper legislation implementation,

the system is still incompatible in maintaining professionals in the public system (MoF 2013b, p.5)⁶¹.

The justification for the ‘second civil service’ is that it exists to compensate for low capacity in government yet the verdict of most studies suggest that the approaches adopted by the IC have not delivered capacity development. A number of studies suggest that massive ‘buying-in’ of Technical Assistance (TA), both national and international, has not had the desired effect (Michailoff, 2007; OECD, 2009; SIGAR, 2010). The OECD noted:

A widely held view within the government is that very little donor technical assistance has been directed specifically at building government capacities for program delivery and for increased public accountability. The perception, therefore, is that ineffective technical support has contributed to the weakening of local ownership and leadership of the development agenda for the country and has inhibited efforts to build capacities within the national government (p.29).

One particular project had received specific attention from SIGAR. USAID Afghanistan had awarded a \$218.6 million contract to BearingPoint to implement the Capacity Development Programme starting in 2007. The 2008 audit concluded there was:

A lack of evidence to demonstrate that this program was on track to achieve planned results. The program lacked key deliverables necessary for effective implementation, monitoring, and reporting of program activities and results. Specifically, detailed work plans outlining what the contractor planned to accomplish and results monitoring plans with performance indicators, targets, and periodic reporting against these targets were not in place (SIGAR,2008).

The auditors found that the contractor was employing more than 460 staff in the Ministry of Education at the request of the US mission. Unsurprisingly, in 2010 SIGAR concluded what most donors suspected, that:

Neither the Afghan government nor donors can account for the total number of Afghan government employees and technical advisors that receive salary support or identify how much they are paid, due in large part to a lack of transparency over that support (SIGAR 2010, p.ii).

The situation regarding the provision of international assistance is further complicated by the lack of clarity between the extent of inputs of experienced international technical

⁶¹ This policy was approved by the Cabinet on 8 April 2013.

advisers as opposed to the large numbers of inexperienced international staff associated with the ‘civilian surge’ (GIROA, 2010).

Most capacity development efforts are envisaged as being provided by expert foreign technical advisers. Dr Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan’s former Minister of Finance, when speaking at the ODI on 23 May 2008 on fragile states, famously noted of technical assistance (TA) to Afghanistan: “Approximately 5% of technical assistance is Gold standard, 15% Silver and the rest rubbish”⁶². However, the actual number of international Technical Advisers is far less than popularly reported. Only 157 international technical advisers were reported as present in the Key Ministries in 2009 by the World Bank survey. Most international personnel reside in Embassy and Military compounds; other international staff support the 800 or so NGOs noted as present in Afghanistan in 2006. Very little evidence is available on the ‘quality’ of international technical assistance but there is evidence that after 2005, the quality of TA dropped off and this is corroborated by evidence in chapter 6.

Barakat (2008, p.11) draw similar conclusions with regard to capacity development and international intervention in Afghanistan. He notes:

*A weak State which has lost legitimacy just as the insurgency has expanded ... the country’s future will depend upon the government’s ability to gain capacity, legitimacy and autonomy and to rid itself of the corruption which has not only weakened the State but severely hindered the economy. The international community has contributed to such problems through specific policies and practices and, more broadly, through its willingness to establish parallel structures and to deprive the government of the rights and responsibilities of an independent State, despite the stated intention to do quite the opposite*⁶³.

In conclusion, the most recent programme document produced by the IARCSC, the National Priority Programme (GIROA, NPP3, 2012), sets out the new programme for

⁶² Personal Correspondence

⁶³ The report is a consolidation of research including a Political Economy Analysis led by Peter Middlebrook, a Strategic Conflict Assessment led by Barakat, a Growth Diagnostic Scoping Study led by Ulloa and Miller, and a Poverty, Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis led by Sippi Azarbaijani-Mogaddam.

Efficient and Effective Government and lists a number of structural constraints that continue to need to be addressed:

Including: (i) a weak revenue base; (ii) continuous and negative political interference; (iii) weak system-wide and human resources capacities across the public sector; (iv) limited coordination among GIRoA and the development partners on capacity building initiatives; (v) low motivation and general resistance to change across the sector calling for new incentives; (vi) high levels of corruption; and, (vii) limited national human resources among other factors.

NPP3 took 2.5 years to draft a plan for a three-year programme. Donors could not agree with the Government the scope of the NPP and the required budget. Ironically, the only unendorsed NPP (out of 22 National Priority Programmes) is the Governance Cluster NPP2 National Transparency and Accountability Programme. The other Governance Cluster NPP, Justice for All NPP2, essentially the rule of law programme, took three years to be endorsed.

In conclusion, evaluations of CSAR are generally poor, and significant problems have been created with all aspects of HR management. Significant problems persist with civil service appointments and little in the way of administrative reform has been achieved. Capacity development has been weak, resulting in significant capacity substitution and the creation and continued support of a substantial second civil service.

4.5.3 Defining and Measuring Public Sector Capability – how to know whether progress is being made and the links to conditionality

Afghanistan is not much different from other FCASs in that the primary driver of reforms is through conditionality attached to overall financial (budget and balance of payments) support and individual project milestones and incentive benchmarks, and specific donor conditionality related to loans or grants. Conditionality here is defined as:

The application of specific, pre-determined requirements that directly or indirectly enter into a donor's decision to approve or continue to finance a loan or grant (Bull et al, 2006).

The importance of 'conditionality' is that it establishes between the host country and the IC those issues which are regarded as the highest priority to pursue. These 'priorities' are

what matter to the IC. It is an old idiom in development circles that ‘what matters gets measured’. Measures of progress specifically on CSAR have not been prepared and one of the findings of the evaluations is that monitoring and evaluation is either deficient or has not been carried out. It took until 2006 for the Afghanistan Compact to spell out some specific benchmarks for CSAR but these were never followed up. The CSAR agenda was subsequently subsumed within a broader notion of overall ‘good governance’. In early interventions donors were not specifying hard conditionality. ‘Conditionality’ has evolved over the years and still acts as a useful proxy to define donor’s priorities and what they want to be measured.

Under Article IV of the IMF’s Articles of Agreement, the IMF holds bilateral discussions with members, usually every year. In the context of a fragile or conflict-affected state they have increased significance and are usually linked to other analytic work with the other international finance institutions such as the World Bank, the ADB and the host government itself. The IMF provides credit facilities for countries with protracted balance of payments problems. Trust Funds are usually established to provide a vehicle to put funds on-budget and come with an ‘incentive’ programme attached to the implementation of reforms. In this case the Afghanistan Reconstruction Task Fund (ARTF) was established by donors and is administered by the World Bank. Afghanistan is typical in this respect.

Appendix D summarises the principal conditionality linked to CSAR in Afghanistan (as at mid-2012). The table includes the conditionality for the ARTF Incentive Programme, the IMF Enhanced Credit Facility (ECF) Structural Benchmarks and the most recent 2012 international agreement signed in Tokyo, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) referred to in Table 4.5 above. Appendix D demonstrates that the conditionality attached to CSAR itself is minimal. Therefore, for the majority of CSAR issues there is no conditionality; there are no clear penalties for corrupt employment practices, no penalties for failing to meet administrative reform targets as there are none, no penalties for non-implementation of the civil service laws and so on. As the data from Appendix D amply indicates, current CSAR conditionality relates only to:

1. Agreeing a strategy for dealing with the salaries in the 'second' civil service.
2. Agreeing minor amendments to the Civil Service Law.
3. Achieving improved clarity on sub-national governance responsibilities.

The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) agreed at the Tokyo Conference was the first document signed by the IC and GIRoA clearly based on the principle of mutual commitments – future aid flows are dependent on the Afghan Government's progress on governance and economic reforms in five thematic areas. The document was specific enough to identify clear deliverables. Donors have committed to provide aid and improve aid effectiveness in return for the Government dealing with a number of priority reforms.

Furthermore, and as described above, donor assistance and TMAF indicators are linked together and coordinated through a range of financing instruments, including the ARTF's 'incentive programme' and the IMF's programme benchmarks, where poor performance results in funding being reduced or withheld altogether. Structures for monitoring progress against TMAF indicators have been agreed by the Afghan Government and donor partners in Kabul, and initial review meetings took place in November and December 2012. Whilst the TMAF is not a legally binding agreement, the penalties for missing benchmarks are imposed on the Afghan Government without compromise. There are no specific TMAF deliverables that deal with CSAR.

On the other hand, the PFM Roadmap is a key reform agenda. Progress of the PFM Roadmap, NPP1, is also closely monitored by donors. Reports on its performance are channelled through the Office of the Senior Minister, from the Deputy Minister for Finance. The constant focus on supporting the PFM agenda and particularly on Treasury and the budget is in part demonstrated by Afghanistan now being ranked 26th worldwide in the fiscal and budgetary transparency index, called the Open Budget Index (OBI)⁶⁴. At

⁶⁴ Open Budget Survey (2012) accessed at <http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/OBI2012-Report-English.pdf>.

the same time it has consistently recorded encouraging scores in the PEFA. Comparison with other countries shows that PFM performance in Afghanistan as of December 2007 was better than that of many other comparable countries in most categories, with an average score across the 28 categories of 2.2 (out of 4). The comparable average in 2005 was 1.7⁶⁵. By 2013, the PEFA score for Afghanistan⁶⁶ had shown further improvements with a small decline in five Performance Indicators (PIs), but positive progress on ten indicators, whilst 11 remained unchanged. The report notes:

Afghanistan has accomplished, in a difficult post-conflict situation, remarkable progress on the fiscal front. Despite pressures, fiscal discipline has been strictly enforced and maintained, and there is significant fiscal transparency (p.vii).

PEFA assessments, though, just like many other assessments, are not carried out by the host Government, although they ought to be. The PEFA Secretariat⁶⁷ noted in 2009:

Most assessments have been initiated and led by donor agencies, but the extent of government involvement has increased sharply over the last 2 years. Self-assessments (conducted by governments themselves, using either their own staff or non-government organisations contracted by them) and joint assessments are still a very small proportion of assessments⁶⁸.

For the OBI, Afghanistan improved its score from 8% in 2008 to 21% in 2010 and to 59% in 2012, reflecting that the country is a lot more transparent (fiscally) than many countries in the region and comparable countries in the world. Paradoxically, this is at the same time as being ranked 3rd in the 2012 Annual Transparency International Corruption index, being beaten only by North Korea and Somalia (Transparency International, 2012).

⁶⁵ PEFA scores are usually ABCD; a few PEFA use 1–4. The author has summed the scores (ignoring where score includes a+). It is not usual to have an overall PEFA score. For further elaboration see the 2008 PEFA Report Exec. Summary, see figure 2 and table 1.

⁶⁶ Scores are available in draft only, as at July 2013 – World Bank (2013) ‘Afghanistan Public Financial Management and Accountability Assessment’. This document is referenced as having World Bank authorship for convenience, though the Bank claims it is a joint report by Development Partners and the Government.

⁶⁷ The PEFA Programme was founded in 2001 as a multi-donor partnership between seven donor agencies and international financial institutions to assess the condition of country public expenditure, procurement and financial accountability systems and develop a practical sequence for reform and capacity building actions (statement taken from website).

⁶⁸ Accessed at <http://www.pefa.org/en/content/pefa-monitoring-and-evaluation-reports-0> on 10 July 2013.

The pressure to focus mostly on the agreements made with the International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and the need to pay attention to the operations of Trust Funds is understandable for the Government, as not to do so would have serious implications for the future of bilateral support to the Government. In 2012, the Government failed to meet the ARTF Incentive Programme (IP) benchmarks and revenue targets and this cost the Government \$3.75 million a month in 1391 for each missed benchmark, and \$11.2 m in 2013 (See Appendix E). The debacle with the Kabul Bank failure precipitated the disengagement of the IMF's Extended Credit Facility and also had a knock-on effect on the ARTF, as the ARTF donors and Afghanistan had agreed that it was a precondition for the Incentive Programme that the ongoing IMF-supported programme be in place (currently the ECF).

In summary, the Structural Adjustment Programmes and leverage exercised through the use and control of Trust Funds direct the environment and set of priorities within which the donors and IFIs support public sector and institutional reforms. Such a tactic has been noted in a number of other countries such as Mozambique (Harrison 2007). That the Government of Afghanistan feels it does not have control of the ARTF, and thus also the conditionality and administrative priorities, is confirmed by the findings of an independent review by SCANTEAM (2012). As a result of the SCANTEAM review the MoF in 2013 started a process of seeking greater control over the Trust Funds in terms of their management.

Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) indicators are used by the World Bank annually as the main factor in determining the allocation of IDA⁶⁹ resources among eligible countries. The indicators measure country performance in implementing policies that promote economic growth and poverty reduction. The CPIA for Afghanistan as measured by the Bank was 2.4 for the period 2003–7 and more recently for 2008–11 was 2.5; then in 2011 it increased again to 2.7. The score for 'quality of public administration' stayed at 2.5. However, while the methodology of the Performance Based Allocation (PBA) system is in the public domain, the detailed CPIA and IDA Country Performance

⁶⁹ International Development Association (IDA), the concessional lending arm of the World Bank.

Ratings (ICP) numerical ratings for individual countries are available only to World Bank staff. On the CPIA, the Bank's 2004 report had recommended including:

A stronger involvement of country authorities, providing them with an opportunity for comment on assessments as part of a consultation process, not as a negotiation of the ratings. (IDA 2004)

During the IDA13 replenishment in 2001, discussions had previously taken place on the issue of further disclosure of country ratings for IDA. The IDA 13 Replenishment Report noted that:

Disclosure of the rating system would allow it to benefit from open scrutiny and to serve as a diagnostic tool for strengthening development partnerships. Deputies agreed that sharing ratings with client countries was an important step and recommended that IDA explore ways to share ratings with other partners with the goal of public disclosure of these ratings ... it is clearly desirable that borrower governments are aware of the outcome of IDA's performance-based assessment for their country, and that performance problems and remedial actions are fully and frankly discussed between the Bank and country authorities (IDA, 2001, p.18).

The implication is that full disclosure of the IDA CPIA and Country Performance Ratings would start with the 2005 ratings but this has not happened. Currently, the scores are relayed to government through a simple letter and there is no public record of how the Bank came to its decision on the score.

The Bank does not use the CPIA scores to monitor individual country progress; rather they are for comparative purposes: with each country score compared to a regional average. In addition, it is very difficult to make even incremental progress, as can be demonstrated by the seemingly slow progress in Afghanistan over the ten-year period. The 2013 assessment by the Bank has not yet been passed to the GIRoA.

The Bank has realised that the CPIA scores may only tell some of the story for post-conflict countries and have therefore devised the Post-Conflict Indicators Framework (PCPI), which attempts to assess the quality of a country's policy and institutional framework to support a successful transition and recovery from conflict, as well as to foster sustainable growth, poverty reduction and the effective use of development

assistance. No formal publication fully describes the methodology. To date, despite the Bank claiming to have carried out an assessment for Afghanistan, it has not been possible to acquire the data. The PCPIs also are treated the same as CPIA scores; they are consulted on but not negotiated. The final analysis leading to the scoring by the Bank is not shared.

The World Bank also uses Actionable Governance Indicators (AGIs), launched in 2007, to measure improvements in overall governance. AGIs focus on specific and narrowly defined aspects of governance, rather than broad dimensions. The indicators are intended to provide information on a variety of governance reforms. The AGIs for Afghanistan include a measure for ‘Overall Public Administration and Professionalism’⁷⁰. The indicator is provided to the Bank by the Global Integrity Report, which is focused only on an index of transparency, accountability and measure of anti-corruption⁷¹. Incidentally, there is no measure provided for Afghanistan. The Bank’s HRM AGIs are a more sophisticated measure of progress on six key core HRM measures which include:

- Attracting and retaining human capital;
- Fiscally sustainable wage bill;
- Depoliticised, meritocratic management;
- Performance-based management;
- Ethical behaviour; and
- Effective collaboration across cadres.

Whilst these have most relevance to civil service reform the Bank does not collect such data for Afghanistan.

There are other indicators that could be brought to bear and the World Bank is at the forefront of work on these indicators which seek to demonstrate progress on public sector

⁷⁰ Afghanistan report available at https://agidata.org/Site/Report.aspx?report=IDA_REPORT&country=1, accessed 28 April 2013.

⁷¹ See <http://www.globalintegrity.org/report>.

reform. Recognising the gap in data collection and useful indicators the Bank has announced a new initiative on its website (only):

Jointly with other donors, the World Bank's Public Sector Governance Unit is launching a multi-donor initiative aimed at expanding the coverage of Indicators for the Strength of Public Management Systems (ISPMS) ... the approach is designed to keep costs in check by systematically building on existing datasets and data collection infrastructure of governments, donors and NGOs, rather than establishing new ones⁷².

In summary, progress on CSAR is not systematically monitored in Afghanistan, nor is it apparently currently a priority for either the Government or the IC. The focus is almost entirely on PFM, fiscal sustainability, and measuring general progress on selected elements of 'good governance' and, most recently, fighting corruption. The latter issue provides the principal data for governance indicators on the improvement of public administration, although no data is actually available for Afghanistan in any event.

The CPIA scores (including measures of 'quality of public administration') and the associated PCNIs, which ultimately determine IDA allocations, are confidential and not negotiated with the Government. Yet all these indices impact substantially on donor behaviour and determine access to crucial development funds. The Development Policy Grants accessed through these Funds (the IDA allocations and the Fragile States Fund) are often subject to conditions but, as the evidence above strongly suggests, rarely are these 'conditions' related to encouraging improvements to CSAR.

The clearest and most recent expression of the current priorities of the Afghan Government is in the request for funding approval of the Development Policy Grant (under IDA 16) to support critical economic and fiscal reforms. The proposals are developed in close cooperation with the local World Bank staff. In an annex to the letter from the Ministry of Finance to the President of the World Bank it is clearly stated that:

⁷² World Bank website:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/0,,contentMDK:23304376~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:286305,00.html>, accessed 28 April 2013.

The primary objectives of the grants from the DPG are to support economic growth and fiscal sustainability over the medium- to long-term. The reforms seek to create a conducive investment environment in potential high growth sectors including mining, agriculture, and telecommunications. On fiscal sustainability, measures aim at strengthening revenue mobilization, mainly in the customs arena.

For the World Bank at least, the sole focus on CSAR is through CBR and continued pay and grading reform. It is not possible to discern any other avenues through which reform might be achieved.

4.6 Summary Findings

Legacies

The history of Afghanistan demonstrates clearly the dominance of the centre over the periphery and its always loose connections to the largely traditional rural interior. Afghanistan has suffered greatly from revolution, counter-revolution, endless civil war, administrative deconstruction and ultimately reduction to penury. It has demonstrated the characteristics of a corrupt and ‘rentier state’ for all of recent history. The complex local and regional politics and the local political economy are recognised by all and consistently referred to in the literature. The situation in 2001 after 25 years of ideological and civil conflict and the defining moment of 9/11 brought Afghanistan onto the international stage. The International Community, colluding with the new Afghan administration, intended to bring in a new modern lean administration. This was intended to be a break with the past: a modern democratic, liberal state with a market-oriented economy managed by a competent, efficient and merit-based civil service. Many non-‘experts’ in PAR assumed that public administration did not exist in Afghanistan in 2001 and that the IC was starting from scratch. This was not the case.

The Initial Optimism and Comprehensive Normative Approach of the Early Years

Responsibility for establishing the initial direction of reform was handed over to donors and their advisers. If any role was played by the Government in the early days it is not at all clear how its decisions were reached, their level of participation and exactly whose priorities for PAR were being addressed. All initial documents were produced by the World Bank and Asia Development Bank, international consultants, and UNDP country staff. Initial documents setting out priorities make little reference to what Afghans (other than a small elite) may have regarded as their priorities; indeed, in the time available it would have been simply impossible to undertake comprehensive surveys in a participatory fashion.

This is problematic; in Rubin’s words, the priorities would not likely have been a “consolidated and gender sensitive democracy within two and a half years” (Rubin, 2006,

p.184). The long standing arguments about whose priorities are being addressed was raised again in 2008. The confusion about ‘whose’ state the IC is building, and how, is echoed by ICG. They note:

Disunity in Afghanistan is about not just structural issues or coordination but also priorities and preferences, goals, means and, increasingly, endgames, exit strategies and, perhaps most importantly, the reasons for being in the country at all. (2008, p.12).

A number of problems plagued the early work on PAR and undoubtedly two of the main acknowledged problems were the very low capacity of existing officials in post and the lack of knowledge of the Afghan administration and local political economy.

Given the frustration with progress on the early support to CSAR it came as no surprise that the Afghanistan Compact demanded a stronger focus on capacity building and measurable ‘results’. This early period also witnessed the beginnings of the ‘second civil service’, which, in the ensuing ten years, has grown to an alarming proportion of the civil service.

The period from 2006–8 marked a transition of sorts as the PAR readjusted along the lines of the emerging ANDS. ‘Pay and Grading’ reform took the CSAR centre stage but the reform process was too slow and incomplete, and has left a system incompatible with appropriate modern HR methods. This period coincided with a serious decline in security. There was minimal conditionality attached to CSAR in the year prior to 2006 and thereafter more recent conditionality only addresses those PFM elements where progress can be demonstrated more easily.

Specific Problems Evident from Working in Afghanistan

The multilateral and bilateral evaluations are unanimous in concluding that delivering aid in Afghanistan is particularly expensive with higher administration costs, additional security and life support costs and overheads, implementation delays and sometimes complex subcontracting arrangements. Additionally, the evaluations all raised serious concerns over the sustainability of programmes and projects. Multilateral and bilateral assessments also point to multiple failings by donors, including their lack of experience

in dealing with states and situations like Afghanistan and the inability of international staff to even do their jobs due to the serious problems with security and restrictions on their movement.

The Key Early Role of the World Bank and Their Ongoing Role and Support

Alongside the EC and OECD, the World Bank influence on PAR in developing countries cannot be underestimated. It has been one of the main funders of PAR, entrusted with managing major Development Trust Funds, and a provider of TA since the 1980s. Many other donors have taken a lead from their intellectual direction and approach. The Bank has taken a leading role throughout the whole period in CSAR. It led the initial prioritisation and project designs, and arguably has provided the intellectual lead for most PAR interventions, particularly for the PFM elements. It has taken the lead in steering priorities for the ARTF, and directed much of the analytic work underpinning studies of public administration. The Bank drafted the current CBR project document, the only extant cross-government CSAR intervention. The Bank undertakes/steers PEFA, CPIA and PCNI indicator studies but does not share the basis of the calculations with the Government and these indicators do not adequately monitor progress on CSAR. Most diagnostics prepared by the bank focus on issues around capacity building and service delivery. The main success of the Bank in Afghanistan has to date only been in the area of PFM.

In the most recent evaluation of World Bank support to civil service reform in Afghanistan (World Bank, 2010), the Bank judged its own current interventions to be ‘moderately unsatisfactory’. The new Bank approach to PSM published in the last 18 months recognises many of the problems associated with implementing CSAR, particularly in FCASs. Their poor experiences with civil service and administrative reform (generally) all point to an understandable apprehension with regard to further engagement in CSAR.

Consistently Poor Evaluations and Ongoing Problems with the IARCSC

The evaluations and assessments of the IARCSC demonstrate a difficult birth and early years, understaffed and with a lack of clear political support and leadership in the period post-2004–5. Results from reform programmes are consistently problematic throughout the period since 2002. The approval of the new pay and grading policy took nearly three years to work its way through the government systems and after four years of implementation is still not complete, although arguably it has been overtaken by events. The IARCSC NPP3 took nearly three years to prepare and was the subject of significant disagreements with donors.

The IARCSC is now acting as a ‘ministry’ with responsibility for management of personnel as well as a more traditional Public Service Commission role that provides the necessary checks and balances between government and its employees. It remains charged with the administration reform mandate and the delivery of all civil service recruitment, training, policy development, management and delivery. Reports from all quarters, including ministers, indicate continual problems with recruitment, selection and appeals, continual unfavourable reviews from project evaluations and poor performance in a number of areas. The progressive marginalisation of IARCS from ongoing reform programmes culminating with the major reform project, the World-Bank-administered CBR, being located in the MoF, despite nearly all of its component project parts being HR and administration issues. The new Government strategy on the use of National Technical assistance for the civil service was also prepared in the MoF and submitted to the Cabinet by the MoF, and will be implemented by the MoF.

Little Understanding of the Funds Available for CSAR

In Afghanistan it is not possible to accurately identify what funds have been allocated to support CSAR as a key subset of PAR and an important element in the whole statebuilding exercise. The data is simply too obscured, donors do not comply with requests for supplying data and, in any event, the classification system in the DAD does not capture data accurately.

The Growth of the Paralell or ‘Second’ Civil Service – Use of National Technical Advisers (NTA)

The situation with the growth of the so-called ‘second civil service’ has in the last three years escalated to become one of the most serious problems facing the Government as it seeks a sustainable workforce post-transition. The situation has been created by both donors and the host government. Solving it will be extremely difficult. It is highly likely that emerging government policy to support regularisation of civil service salaries and a reduction in the number of externally financed staff may have been and will continue to be unduly influenced by those advisers who understandably have a keen interest in perpetuating current arrangements and a continued dependency on donor-supplemented salaries. The World-Bank-administered CBR has forced the issue to be raised to Cabinet level through the preparation of a draft strategy, but implementation is slow; the CBR project is substantially behind its implementation schedule already. The IARCSC has taken 12 years to establish the principle that it will set a general entrance exam for new recruits to the civil service. The planned implementation was to start in April 2013 but this too has been delayed indefinitely to sometime after the 2014 elections.

The Change of Focus from Government to ‘Governance’

One particularly confusing element of the intervention by the IC in Afghanistan is the frequent conflation of the terms ‘governance’ and ‘government’. The former has grown in its usage with regard to public administration in all reform contexts of contemporary public administration. However, it is a much broader concept than ‘government’ and subject to much debate. Keohane and Nye (2000) note:

By governance, we mean the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group. Government is the subset that acts with authority and creates formal obligations. Governance need not necessarily be conducted exclusively by governments. Private firms, associations of firms, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and associations of NGOs all engage in it, often in association with government bodies, to create governance; sometimes without government authority.

Good governance is more than increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy or improving public services, it includes making government more open, transparent, accountable and democratic. The latter are purported to make a state less

likely to relapse back into conflict. Governance, however, refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority by many actors in the management of the country, not just the government. Unfortunately, as the review of literature has shown, we do not have an 'agreed' list of key functions the state should carry out. Rather there exists only recent 'field experience and practitioner know-how' to identify which state institutions are critical to immediate effectiveness and initial statebuilding.

It has been suggested that the conflict-affected state has to attempt to address all these governance issues at the same time as a way of acquiring legitimacy with its citizens and with the International Community. However, clearly in an FCAS not everything can be done or needs to be done all at once.

The IARCSC is unfortunately neither mandated nor equipped to support the broader objectives of PAR apropos good governance, and neither is the IDLG. The IARCSC is limited even in its ability to introduce new practices in line ministries; the IDLG can only coordinate and facilitate. The IC has also seemingly forgotten about its own significant impact on local governance as it operates outside of government structures. This has become even more difficult in recent years as PAR now explicitly attempts to embrace a broader whole of government approach to CSAR in the context of overall good governance; many of the benchmarks for achieving good governance are well outside the mandate of the IARCSC and IDLG.

Yet, post-2006, and coinciding with the declining security situation and the growth of the concept and application of stabilisation in Afghanistan, the theme of achieving 'good governance' has become dominant. Conditionality in connection with maintaining financial support from donors openly addresses notions of 'good governance', yet neither the Government nor the IC ever move beyond this vague articulation, and measurements of improved governance are unclear. Indicators are absent; no one is monitoring overall 'governance' indicators. The Government does not prioritise indicators through its own 'Governance Cluster' of the relevant ministries. The present general focus on 'good enough governance' assumes there is 'good enough' data in the field to prove there is

some sort of progress. Unfortunately, the data that might demonstrate progress is not there.

Evolving Priorities of the IC

In the immediate post-2001 intervention by the IC in Afghanistan priorities were identified. In the area of CSAR this included the need to address some key issues such as politicisation of the civil service, merit-based appointments, reforming outdated institutions, defining appropriate remuneration systems, pay and grading and rules and procedures for the civil service. From an early comprehensive agenda to rebuild Afghanistan with a strong focus on public administration, the debate has shifted to one of prioritising security followed by a growing realisation that the stability of Afghanistan will not be achieved by security activities alone; good governance was the new key.

In April 2013 the British Embassy in Kabul issued the clearest of statements setting out its priorities during the last months up to the transition and then beyond. This report accessed from the British Embassy is now found at (UK Government, 2012-13) :

We will provide £178million each year until 2017, in return the Afghan government has made a number of promises, such as reducing corruption, improving human rights, including women's rights, and holding credible and inclusive elections. We are supporting the Afghan government to develop a justice system that is able to deal with the most serious crimes, particularly terrorism, narcotics and corruption, while upholding human rights, we are helping Afghanistan develop a more dynamic economy and become more able to meet its own economic needs without external support.

It is clear from the findings of the documentation reviewed that interest and support for CSAR has waned significantly and the focus has instead switched to consolidating the PFM Roadmap, addressing corruption and financial integrity and higher-level systems of accountability, economic development, and addressing the problems caused by a centralised administration.

Having examined the performance of CSAR over the last ten years, the thesis next turns in Chapter 5 to the links between these reforms and the wider context of stabilisation. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 suggested strongly that when a host government makes

priorities for PAR this should in turn link to other key strategic and operational policy and budget decisions that are intended to implement government priorities. In the case of an FCAS such as Afghanistan, this includes a whole raft of financial and administrative decisions that underpin maintaining security, fighting insurgents, building a longer-term peace and re-establishing the State across all the territory.

Where a public administration system has more or less collapsed and/or was already seriously deficient before the conflict, re-establishment of an even minimally functioning system will require comprehensive, patient, step-by-step support over a long period of time. The literature review demonstrated that the development of efficient and orderly public administration takes decades. However, efforts to achieve a working administration in a stabilisation environment do not have the luxury of time if the work is to make a constructive contribution to stability operations; herein lies the dilemma.

Chapter 5 The Wider Links of CSAR to Stabilisation Operations in Afghanistan

5.1 Introduction

If success in COIN requires prior, or at least temporally parallel, success in nationbuilding, it is foredoomed to failure. Nations cannot be built. Most especially they cannot be built by well-meaning but culturally arrogant foreign social scientists, no matter how well intentioned and methodologically sophisticated (Gray, 2012).

This Chapter examines the wider links of CSAR to statebuilding, peacebuilding, stabilisation and transition. It examines how stabilisation as a concept has evolved in Afghanistan closely tracking the evolution of the broader stabilisation agenda. The chapter then locates the role of CSAR within stabilisation and specifically the Afghanistan context. It also looks ahead to the 2014 transition and longer-term development outlook, the so-called ‘transformation decade’ 2015–25.

The discussion seeks evidence on whether the limits to progress on CSAR and support to institutions more generally may compromise or even contradict the overarching stabilisation objectives, and whether the design and implementation of civil service and administrative reforms as part of an overall effort to bring about ‘good governance’, are possible or even absolutely necessary for stabilisation objectives. The chapter also look at what role CSAR plays in achieving progress towards wider statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives.

5.2 How the Concept of Stabilisation Evolved in Afghanistan

The recent theme of ‘stabilising’ Afghanistan post-2001 had earlier origins in the 1998 Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (SFA) (UN, 1998). The SFA was rooted in the perceived need to engage with the Taliban based on a set of development ‘principles’ and was an early example of the belief that aid of itself could contribute to peacebuilding and therefore a more stable Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) published a review of the SFA in 2002 and noted:

Aid takes on a security role insofar as its activities are thought to promote peace and stability through contributing to such things as conflict resolution and social reconstruction. This is what this report, and others, refers to as the 'securitisation' of aid. The SFA is an example of the attempt to use aid in such a strategic manner (Duffield et al., 2002, p.iv).

However, after interviewing nearly 80 key informants, the authors of the review concluded that the SFA, as the key strategic document of the International Community, had failed in its basic aim. The key paragraph is set out below as its findings are quite prescient in hindsight:

The central concern of the review team, therefore, has been why coherence has remained elusive. Rather than a technical problem of co-ordination, the main conclusion is that intrinsic and unresolved differences remain over the nature and role of politics, assistance and rights. In laymen's terms no one could agree to take the required 'principled' approach. The bold attempt of the SFA, which tried to reconcile the always conflicting objectives of the politics and aid missions, had failed. A further major cause of failure was that the SFA required substantial changes to the way in which assistance was planned and funded ... however, the diverse institutional, political and assistance agendas of both agencies and donors have prevented such a 'quantum leap' from occurring (p.vi).

This chapter will attempt to demonstrate that little has changed in the ensuing 15 years and the 'hard yards' and lessons identified in the decade of the 1990s in Afghanistan were not learnt or acted upon. There continue to be extreme problems with coordination of donor agencies in Afghanistan; differences still remain over the nature and role of politics, how assistance is to be provided and the rights of Afghans within that process. These issues are explored in more detail in the interviews in Chapter 6. In a recent article, Faust et al. (2013) argue that three major challenges may explain the persistent problems of donor harmonisation in fragile states: (1) the cognitive challenge of explaining the origins of state fragility and deducing effective instruments and interventions; (2) the political challenge of reconciling divergent political motives for engagement; as well as (3) the challenge related to the organisational logic of competing aid agencies. These observations mirror the early analysis of Duffield et al. (2002).

The SFA hardly had a chance to prove its worth as a ‘stabilisation’ strategy before the events of 9/11 began to unfold. The Bonn Agreement, reached just before the US military campaign had even concluded, specified:

upon the official transfer of power, all mujahidin, Afghan armed forces and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority, and be reorganized according to the requirements of the new Afghan security and armed forces (section v.1).

The Agreement requested the International Community (IC) to approve a UN-mandated force to help provide security and train and equip the new Afghan security and armed forces. Though it did not mention the need for ‘stabilisation’ per se, it did suggest the need to “promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights in the country” (preamble). The Agreement also called for a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, in hindsight a particularly difficult package of criteria to satisfy when nothing like it had ever existed in the history of Afghanistan. In these words, many of the initial approaches to establishing a new administration can be recognised. However, new documents released from the US National Security Archive also point to the initial reluctance of the US Administration to get too involved in excessive nationbuilding and reconstruction activities⁷³.

Consecutive UNSC Resolutions in the latter half of 2001 also focus almost entirely on the transition to the AIA and the need for reconstruction (UNSCs 1333, 1378, 1383, 1386). Subsequent reports by the SG to the UNSC, from 2002 onwards also did not address stability per se; rather they were focused on humanitarian aid, development, reconstruction and the business of international coordination. As stated, much of the early focus was on re-establishing the basic administrative function of government, in line with the objectives of the Bonn Agreement.

⁷³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld to Douglas Feith, ‘Strategy’, Attachment, ‘U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan’, National Security Council, October 16 2001, 7:42am, Secret/Close Hold/Draft for Discussion, 7 pp. [Excised], accessed through <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/index.htm#18>.

However, the deteriorating security situation clearly did not go unnoticed. In 2003 UNSC Report 7904 reported that all but one border district had been classified as “high risk” by the 15 October 2002 United Nations Security Coordinator Assessment. The report suggested that in several border districts, the Taliban had established:

De facto control over district administration ... Attacks by suspected terrorists against government, military and humanitarian personnel were steadily increasing. Recent attacks against humanitarian organisations had predominantly targeted national, rather than international personnel (UNSC 7904, 2003).

UNSC Report 7913 (2003) drew attention to the continued presence of armed groups and the influence of local commanders, noting that in the south, south-east and east provinces “insecurity was greatly exacerbated by terrorist attacks from suspected Taliban, Al Qaeda” and others. The first Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Office was duly established by the US forces in Gardez, Paktia in 2003. Bebbler (2009) referring to Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24, suggests the primary purpose of establishing the PRTs was to act as the primary civil-military relations tool in Afghanistan and Iraq. He describes PRTs as “‘a means to extend the reach and enhance the legitimacy of the central government’ into the provinces of Afghanistan”. Activities of the PRT are further delineated by US Army doctrine:

A PRT does not conduct military operations or directly assist host-nation military forces. The PRT helps the central ministries distribute funds to respective provincial representatives for implementing projects. This assistance encompasses more than a distribution of funds; it includes mentoring, management, and accountability (US Army FM3-07, 2008, pF1).

By 2011, President Karzai, quoted by the BBC, clearly stated the GIROA view that all PRTs would have to be closed. President Karzai ⁷⁴ speaking in Kabul after returning from an international conference in Munich said:

Afghanistan clearly explained its viewpoint on Provincial Reconstruction Teams and structures parallel to the Afghan government ... all activities or bodies which are hindering the Afghan government's development and hindering the governance of Afghanistan.

⁷⁴ Accessed at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12400045> on 18 July 2013.

PRTs were, within a period of eight years, most definitely out of favour with the Afghan Government.

At the point of transition from the AIA to the new Government in 2004, a report prepared by the UN and World Bank for the incoming Karzai Afghan Government only mentioned stability in passing, despite the fact that the insurgency in Afghanistan was already gathering apace, as described above in the series of UNSCs and as verified by Jones (2008). Still, 'stabilisation' was not in any way a 'dominant' theme in International Community documents (UN and World Bank, 2004). However, where stability is mentioned in this document it is linked to the need to build institutions, promote good governance, and support the Government to deliver services and reconstruct the country.

The UN–World Bank advice with regard to 'governance' notes presciently:

Establishing effective trusted administration at local level across the country is key to the stability of the country and a pre-condition for a sustainable anti-narcotics approach. It might be that the establishment of administrative and security functions at District and Provincial level, with some basic services, needs to be prioritised over the management of multiple projects and services at the same time (UN and World Bank, 2004, p.12).

The growing insecurity throughout 2004 was referred to again on 23 August 2005 in UNSC 8478; this marked the end of the Bonn Agreement period of implementation. The Resolution noted:

The Security Council today expressed its strong view that following the parliamentary and provincial council elections on 18 September, the international community must maintain a high level of commitment to assist that country in addressing its remaining challenges, including the security situation, disbandment of illegal armed groups, production and trafficking of drugs and development of government institutions. (UNSC 8478, 2005)

The Resolution also referred for the first time to the need to promote long-term 'peace and stability' in Afghanistan, noting that, although significant gains had been made in meeting the objectives of the Bonn political agenda, the implementation of institutional support had been uneven and remained a challenge. More specifically "many critical State institutions, at both the national and provincial levels, remain weak and susceptible to corruption".

Whilst these successive UNSC Resolutions continually refer to the problems with insecurity in Afghanistan post-2001, the growing appearance, or perhaps full resurrection, of ‘stabilisation’ as a concept is linked time-wise to the deteriorating security pictures in both Iraq and Afghanistan post-2004, the attacks on mainland Europe in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, and foiled international terrorist attacks on transatlantic airliners and other targets in Europe in 2005. The Berlin Declaration on Afghanistan (2004) anticipated the growing concerns, and therefore specifically stated:

That the international community is determined to assist further in the stabilization of the security situation throughout the country, in particular with the deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), which also contribute to reconstruction and development efforts (Berlin, 2004).

Thus the link between the need for stabilisation and the principal response, PRTs, is explicitly made for the first time. The early enthusiasm for PRTs by the US Army meant they were exported immediately to Iraq from Afghanistan in 2005. The Declaration had already stated in a previous paragraph that:

The engagement of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), mandated by the UN-Security Council and now under the command of NATO, and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) – at the request and welcomed by the Afghan Government – will be continued until such time as the new Afghan security and armed forces are sufficiently constituted and operational (para.1).

The debate about whether the Afghan security and armed forces were capable of securing the country was to continue for another ten years. By 2004, 19 PRTs had been established throughout the country. By 2005, there were 22 in total: 13 run by the US and nine by ISAF. Stabilisation as a ‘concept’ was described in chapter 2 and, despite being neither well defined nor consistently understood, nor in any way comprehensively tested, it had clearly taken off in Afghanistan and was embraced enthusiastically by the IC. It is worth noting here that the UK Government still took until 2007 to produce its first published draft guidance on stabilisation. Thus between 2004 and 2007, the development of stabilisation approaches was ‘work in progress’. This assertion is confirmed by the following declaration from the UK Government: “UK approaches and methods are evolving, so this Guide should be treated as a work in progress” (PCRU, 2007). The UK

had created the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) in 2004. The need for improved and more integrated planning, assessment and mission management has simultaneously been recognised by a number of the UK's international partners. The PCRU was founded at the same time as the US equivalent, the Office for the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stability (S/CRS).

In their first comprehensive attempt at a stabilisation 'guide' first published in 2008, the PCRU noted that one stabilisation and reconstruction indicator was "assist in developing governance capacity at national and local levels" (PCRU, 2007, p.24). The guide does not mention public administration more generally, nor the CSAR. The indicators chosen to measure whether progress was being made on 'governance' were "indicators of governance quality (such as World Bank data⁷⁵) and democratic elections that are deemed 'free and fair' by international observers". Such indicators have little use at the local level such as in Helmand where they were first applied and, as noted in the previous chapter, the former is not collected systematically anyway.

The Stabilisation Guide notes that integrated stabilisation planning in Helmand started in 2005. One of the findings of an early review into the planning experience in Helmand was that it took some months *after* commencement of operations in Helmand for "some understanding of context to be gained". Additionally, the planners' early recommendation that it would take much longer to reach key objectives was rejected by UK 'Officials' (PCRU, 2007, p.10). Significant monitoring and evaluation into the UK experience with stabilisation interventions in Helmand did not commence until June 2010⁷⁶. The activities of the UK PRT in Helmand were subject to some disagreements between DFID personnel and those staff working in the PRT; the following statement reflects some of those tensions:

Essentially, DFID see the PRT activities as often departing from the principles of good development practice in terms of process, effectiveness, sustainability and

⁷⁵ A vague reference to 'World Bank data' demonstrates the lack of understanding and precision concerning existing governance indicators.

⁷⁶ Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme, Coffey International, accessed at <http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/stabilisation-and-conflict-resources/web-links/49-afghanistan.html> and

*ethics; while the PRT personnel are free in expressing their opinion that DFID are 'other worldly' and should butt out of their business*⁷⁷.

Early warnings had already been sounded in some quarters about the limited ability of US PRTs to engage in clearly civilian tasks, development activities and, specifically, the building of government institutions (Perito, 2005, p.1). Use by senior US military of the Commander's Emergency Response Fund (CERP) to fund many projects at local level was rising significantly with the US surge but the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) found many instances of poor outcomes, a lack of transparency and accountability. In Laghman, for instance, SIGAR found 92% of projects examined were 'at risk' or have resulted in questionable outcomes (SIGAR, 2011, p.ii).

In July 2006 there were a number of major battles with the Taliban in the south of the country. These events led ultimately to the decision by Britain to deploy over three thousand troops in Helmand in 2006, and for the war on the Taliban to be stepped up significantly⁷⁸. US forces also stepped up operations in Kandahar and on the Pakistan border provinces. The British Helmand campaign was immediately confronted by the difficulty of defining the priority between two different and ultimately contradictory missions, either to win the support of the local population and build the local institutions of government or to fight and eliminate the Taliban and its affiliates. The US Government (US Government, 2009) looking back in 2009 set out some of the difficulties:

Since 2005, the insurgency in Afghanistan has strengthened and adapted, with local insurgent groups (and international and regional terrorist organisations) often cooperating to achieve common aims. Insurgent groups have derived some legitimacy by appealing to ideological affinities and fears of 'foreign occupation' as well as in quick provision of local justice. (p.1).

Moreover, in a more recent reflection AREU (2011, p.2) notes:

⁷⁷ Personal correspondence.

⁷⁸ The real reasons for going into Helmand may never be known, although Cavanagh (2011) has attempted to reconstruct events. Cavanagh concluded that even a brilliantly planned campaign in Helmand could not militate against the bigger failings in the overall NATO-ISAF Strategy.

The intensification of the international military presence from 2006 onward, meant to contain the insurgency, has had the opposite effect, with greater numbers of troops eventually presiding over an acceleration of the insurgency's expansion. In part this was due to regional powers increasing their support as a particular reaction to the growing American presence. The acceleration of the insurgency's spread was also the result of local reactions to the presence of foreign troops.

In sum, despite some differing interpretations of 'stabilisation' and the early emphasis of stabilisation documents on suppressing violent conflict and the need for a political settlement, at its heart is the notion that conflict and weak governance pose a threat to international peace and stability (see also Barakat et al., 2010). Additionally, stabilisation interventions, as envisaged and described in chapter 2, were brought to bear with the intention to win the 'hearts and minds' of the local population. However by 2011–12, a growing body of evidence (Fishtein, 2012; Fishstein and Wilder, 2011) was emerging that suggested many of the underlying assumptions in a hearts and minds strategy were simply just that, assumptions. Whilst there have been some short-term gains there is little evidence of long-term development and security gains. Rather there is a tendency to fuel or create local conflict and the creation of 'perverse incentives' for local people to maintain insecurity.

A Wilton Park conference in 2010, attended by senior military and civilian personnel involved in the Afghanistan campaign, recognised that:

Research findings presented at the conference questioned many of the assumptions underpinning COIN stabilisation strategies, including that: key drivers of insecurity are poverty, unemployment and/or radical Islam; economic development and 'modernisation' are stabilising; aid projects 'win hearts and minds' and help legitimise the government; extending the reach of the central government leads to stabilisation and development projects are an effective means to extend this reach; and the international community and the Afghan government have shared objectives when it comes to promoting development, good governance and the rule of law (Wilton Park, 2010, p.1).

Some additional evidence on the efficacy of the 'hearts and minds' approach in Afghanistan is provided by Beath et al. (2012), who looked at the Government's flagship ARTF-funded National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The study did not find evidence of

NSP reducing levels of violence in areas experiencing significant security problems, although the overall conclusion is that the benefits of the NSP:

Are not only limited to the provision of direct economic and social benefits, but can also contribute to preventing the spread of violent civil conflicts.

The Soviets tried stabilisation through ‘sovietisation’ in Afghanistan, arguably a different approach to ‘hearts and minds’, investing heavily in support to government institutions. Their intervention lasted a total of 110 months⁷⁹ and resulted in over 14,000 troops killed and nearly half a million wounded or sick. They were not successful, Kulakov (2006) notes:

Battlefield victory can be almost irrelevant. There was no task the Soviet armed forces were assigned and failed to carry out. The numerous local successful operations carried out by the Soviet armed forces did not lead to an overall victory. Achievements at the battalion and brigade level could not be translated into a general political success.(p.5)

In evidence from outside of Afghanistan, Bradbury and Kleinman (2010), looking at Kenya and the work of the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HoA) to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of local Muslim communities, noted that simply building infrastructure or delivering ‘aid’ does not of itself win hearts and minds or change the perceptions of local people. Simply put, they note:

The idea that, by delivering aid, the US military can change people’s perceptions about the United States is premised on very simplistic assumptions.

Moreover, President Karzai in 2010 at the Kabul Conference stated:

A focus on quick impact projects is not providing our public with visible results of the immense resources spent on our well-being by our partners. We therefore invite our international partners to create and support an institution with the capability to design and monitor the implementation of programs and large-scale developmental projects. Let us together focus less on short-term projects we term “stabilization” efforts whose effects are often not lasting, and concentrate more on the programs that deliver long-term sustainable economic development⁸⁰.

⁷⁹ The NATO-ISAF intervention will be a minimum of 154 months from February 2002–end 2014.

⁸⁰ President Karzai, Keynote Conference Speech to the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, July 2010.

However, whilst donors such as the US and DFID certainly no longer use the language of ‘quick impact projects’, they continued to design and implement them.

The London Conference Communiqué in January 2010 had introduced the pledge to develop a plan for phased transition to an Afghan security lead. At the NATO Summit meeting in November 2010, it was agreed that responsibility for security would transition to Afghan authorities by the end of 2014.

In response, General McChrystal, new Commander of ISAF in 2009, announced in his initial Commander’s Assessment that a fundamental part of the military strategy was to ‘prioritise responsive and accountable governance’ (ISAF, 2009, pp.1–3)⁸¹. Subsequently his COIN strategy doubled troop numbers and made significant attempts with a civilian surge to support the military effort. The surge was also accompanied by significant increase in funds for ‘stabilisation activities’, mirrored by the UK team in Helmand.

However, and as noted by Jackson and Heysom (2013, p.3):

The surge represented a turning-point for aid agencies. As insecurity spread and intensified, access in large parts of the country became virtually non-existent for many international agencies. At the same time, pressure increased on aid agencies to support development and governance work in areas ‘cleared’ of insurgents. Although there was some productive interaction during this period, notably with respect to civilian protection, many aid agencies sought to avoid direct contact with the military, either to limit the perception of association with ISAF – and increasingly the UN – or simply because they felt that any discussion would be pointless. By 2011, the national-level civil military working group (CMWG) had essentially disbanded.

However, the civilian surge accompanied by a substantial rise in aid funds, as documented in Chapter 4, meant a commensurate rise in corruption as aid contracts were let quickly, supervision experienced significant problems, construction of more and more assets/public goods stored up more and more future costs for O&M⁸², and many contracts were reportedly ‘taxed’ by the insurgents. Allegations in multiple media reports that

⁸¹ Looking back to the previous chapter, one can see that McChrystal’s strategy was linked to the international commitments and agreements made in the 2009 Hague Conference.

⁸² Multiple World Bank–GIROA Reports from 2011 onwards document the rising O&M bill forcing the World Bank to undertake emergency assessments of the rising O&M costs and then open a special window in the ARTF to fund those escalating O&M costs.

persist up to 2013 were that contractors, especially those funded through the US Government, paid protection money to the insurgency just so that they could meet delivery targets⁸³. One clear summary is contained in a memo from the US SIGAR to the USAID Director for Afghanistan in Sep. 2010⁸⁴. TOLO News TV reported on 22 July after the disqualification of the Acting Minister of the Interior by the lower house of the Afghan Parliament, Minister Patang speaking to reporters in Kabul had

Accused the heads of private security companies of providing money to the Taleban to undermine the Interior Ministry's Department for Public Protection. This means supply convoys are being attacked more frequently [by the Taleban] now and police casualties have also increased.

Minister Patang went on to say

The intelligence assessment we have carried out shows that millions of dollars were being provided to Taleban monthly, daily, annually and quarterly so that the security firms could ship NATO supplies and other merchandise safely.

This translation is provided by the BBC Monitoring Service (BBC Mon. Alert SA1 SAsPol sgm/ra.). The following four references are quoted in Giustozzi and Ibrahimi (2012) and further endorse this point.

- An article by Jean MacKenzie, 'Who is funding the Afghan Taliban? You don't want to know', in the Global Post, 13 August 2009. In 2010, ISAF had to launch an investigation into the diversion of project funds by contractors to pay protection money to the Taliban in Southern Afghanistan.
- C. M. Sennott, 'Taxpayer money funnelled to Taliban', also in the Global Post, 30 September 2010
- The USAID Office of Inspector General report, 'Review of Security Costs Charged to USAID Projects in Afghanistan (Review Report No. 5-306-10-002-S)', 29 September 2009 outlines similar allegations
- Jonathan Owen's article, 'Army launches investigation: Corrupt Afghans stealing millions from aid funds', published in The Independent, 7 March 2010.

⁸³

⁸⁴ Accessed at <http://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/audit-reports/5-306-10-002-s.pdf>

Unsurprisingly, recent evidence garnered by the Asia Foundation (2013) suggests “most aid to subnational conflict areas will reinforce local power structures”. In a clear and damning indictment of the contradictions between the necessity to build institutions and the parallel need to pursue a political agreement, the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan notes in his July 2013 report to Congress:

In conclusion, I would also like to reiterate the concerns I raised in our last report about the Army’s refusal to act on SIGAR’s recommendations to prevent supporters of the insurgency, including supporters of the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and al-Qaeda, from receiving government contracts. SIGAR referred 43 such cases to the Army recommending suspension and debarment, based on detailed supporting information demonstrating that these individuals and companies are providing material support to the insurgency in Afghanistan. But the Army rejected all 43 cases (SIGAR, 2013).

McChrystal’s surge was also in part an effort by the IC to re-emphasise the Whole of the Government Approach (WGA), a way to draw together disparate agencies across civilian and military realms of authority (Nixon and Ponzio, 2007; Szayna et al., 2009). Unity of effort of all these agencies is then brought to bear in planning, operational and tactical activities that complement overall strategic goals including the development of host government capacity to support the activities of the International Community. The approach is set out clearly in US military doctrine FM 3-07 ‘Stability Operations’ (2008). The doctrine requires, or rather assumes, that a wide variety of actors work together to support the necessary changes in structures and legislation, organisational cultures and individual expectations, enabled by changes to working networks and in the behaviour of managers and leaders. However, some US authors such as Moss (2013) have started to question the optimistic assumptions around the WGA approach. Pauline Baker, president of The Fund for Peace, a US non-profit organisation, notes:

Except in high profile crisis situations, Washington rarely attempts to develop an integrated, government-wide strategy to prevent conflict and state failure, in which the National Security Council sets overall objectives and figures out how to bring relevant tools of influence to bear in the service of unified country strategies. More commonly, the United States engages individual fragile and failing states in a haphazard and ‘stove-piped’ manner (Baker, 2009).

The WGA approach is sometimes referred to as the Comprehensive Approach in the UK. The Stabilisation Unit (SU), an entity jointly owned by the Department for International

Development (DFID), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) is the primary agency to develop integrated planning and delivery, targeting its assistance in countries emerging from violent conflict where the UK is working as part of an international effort to deliver stability. However, DFID notes that the difficulties in achieving WGAs arise from:

- different mandates of government departments, leading to different priorities (some of which may be in tension);
- tensions between short-term and long-term approaches (with development approaches typically being longer term than security or political ones);
- use of different terminology by government departments, leading to communication problems and lack of mutual understanding;
- differences in where decisions are made (i.e. London or in country);
- definitions of ODA (Official Development Assistance) and non-ODA financing, leading to challenges around funding the security sector (DFID 2010b, p.2).

5.3 The Evolving Context and Wider Links of CSAR to Stabilisation

Before commencing this section, it is worth recalling why the international coalition of forces is still in Afghanistan after 11 years. The UK Government position is clear:

The UK is part of a 50-nation coalition to prevent international terrorists, including Al Qaeda, from again using Afghanistan as a base from which to operate, threatening our security and that of the region (UK Govt, 2013).

The military mission and concomitant civil support effort exist to support that objective. The UK withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 assumes therefore that this ‘threat’ has now been sufficiently diminished, and that Afghanistan can stand on its own feet in terms of maintaining security, is a ‘viable’ state and is underpinned by ‘good enough’ governance. To suggest otherwise is inconceivable or there will be accusations that the UK Government has wasted a great deal of blood and public money in Afghanistan.

At the Kabul Conference in 2011 the process of ‘transition’ was described as ‘well underway’ (GoIRA and NATO/ISAF, 2011). The Strategy is intended to align the IC and the Afghan Government with a common aim. At the Tokyo Conference in July 2012 the

participants agreed a programme of support for the transition period of 2011–14 and then further technical and financial support to a decade of ‘Transformation’. The Tokyo Conference Declaration (2012, p.10) reiterates the mutual commitment to “strengthened governance and institutions”. The official Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on an Enduring Partnership was signed at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, Portugal⁸⁵. The Declaration focuses on the three separate interlinked domains of governance, development and security. At a political level, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO, 2012) notes:

Transition is primarily about strengthening and transferring security responsibility to the Afghans. However, a resilient ANSF⁸⁶ is only part of the solution. Development of a viable Afghan state and a durable political settlement are also vital (FCO, 2012).

For the UK, ‘strengthening of the state’ can be summarised through analysis of the UK Reports to Monthly Reports to Parliament. Analysis of these reports from January to June 2013⁸⁷ demonstrates that the UK’s view of strengthening the Afghan State has the following dimensions:

1. Political: credible presidential and provincial elections, an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process, protection of human rights, particularly those of women;
2. Rule of Law: local justice, counter-narcotics, tackling fraud and corruption, support to police training;
3. Governance: local service delivery, Afghan women’s participation in parliament, strengthening provincial administration; and
4. Economic Development: infrastructure investments, agriculture, mining, de-mining, private sector development.

⁸⁵ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68724.htm?selectedLocale=en.

⁸⁶ Afghan National Security Force (ANSF).

⁸⁷ Interestingly, in two months of reporting there is no mention of support to governance, and analysis of the reports show that subject matter reports move around topic headings, i.e. one month, support for provincial administration is considered ‘governance’, and the next month it is considered ‘social and economic development’.

In the sample six-month-reporting noting above, there is no mention of civil service and administrative reforms. The lack of focus by DFID Afghanistan on CSAR is all the more puzzling as recommendations contained in its own meta-evaluation of engagement in fragile states stated:

DFID should be cautious of using TA in isolation from other instruments or providing TA in the absence of progress on necessary reforms in areas such as the host government's civil service (Chapman and Vaillant, 2010, p.xvi).

There is further inconsistency in the UK understanding and approach. During an interview with John Simpson of the BBC, Sir William Patey, the UK Ambassador to Afghanistan, stated: “by 2015 we will have a viable state with an Afghan security force capable of dealing with any residual insurgency left”(BBC 2011). Yet by early 2012, a few months later, the UK International Development Committee noted, perhaps more realistically:

It may be necessary for the National Security Council (NSC) to redefine DFID Afghanistan's unique priority of 'creating a viable state'. Although it is preferable to build a better state it is not in the hands of DFID to achieve this when there are so many other factors at play such as the situation in Afghanistan's neighbour Pakistan. This priority set for DFID may become harder, if not impossible, to work towards in the absence of a political settlement and if the security situation deteriorates in Afghanistan. Instead the Government should consider setting DFID the objective of delivering measureable benefits for the people of Afghanistan and of working with partners who can operate under any Afghan Government (House of Commons, 2012, para. 109).

The difference of opinion expressed above extends to identifying what will happen post-2014. The UK House of Commons Defence Committee notes in its latest report on Afghanistan:

We have received very little information from the MoD and the FCO as to how they plan to be involved in Afghanistan beyond 2014. Given there are less than two years before the end of 2014, the Government should inform us how it sees its future role in Afghanistan (House of Commons, Defence Committee, 2013, para. 156).

The two other key dimensions of transition are governance and development. The Strategy depends on a shift of centralised administrative activities from the centre to sub-national levels, in effect a de-concentration of government authority, decision-making

and operations from the centre to lower tiers of government and increasing capacity at the sub-national levels, province and district. With regard to administration:

Through Public Administration Reform, GIRoA will also grow its capacity at the national and sub-national level while enhancing organisational efficiency by allowing for transparent, fair and merit-based recruitment and appraisal systems within the Afghan civil service (p.2).

The clear inference is that if these key administrative dimensions are not addressed the state will not be sufficiently capable of governing when foreign forces are withdrawn. The strategy implies that without improvements to governance and public administration, especially at the sub-national government level, there would be further damage to the already shaky legitimacy of the Government, which in turn could conceivably encourage a continuation or resurgence of the insurgency. Notably absent through all the discussions is the attempt to define what a ‘viable’ state is.

Creating a viable state is nowhere more important than at local government level. Here the situation is perplexing. Wilson and Williamson (2012) in a summary of evidence presented to the UK Defence Committee note:

District and provincial governments are the place where people meet government. District, provincial and municipal government are the tiers of government most capable of being responsive and accountable in a way that can build state credibility and promote stability. It is the level at which local political solutions can be brokered and important stakeholders can be brought into the system. Yet it is a part of government that has been ignored and bypassed.

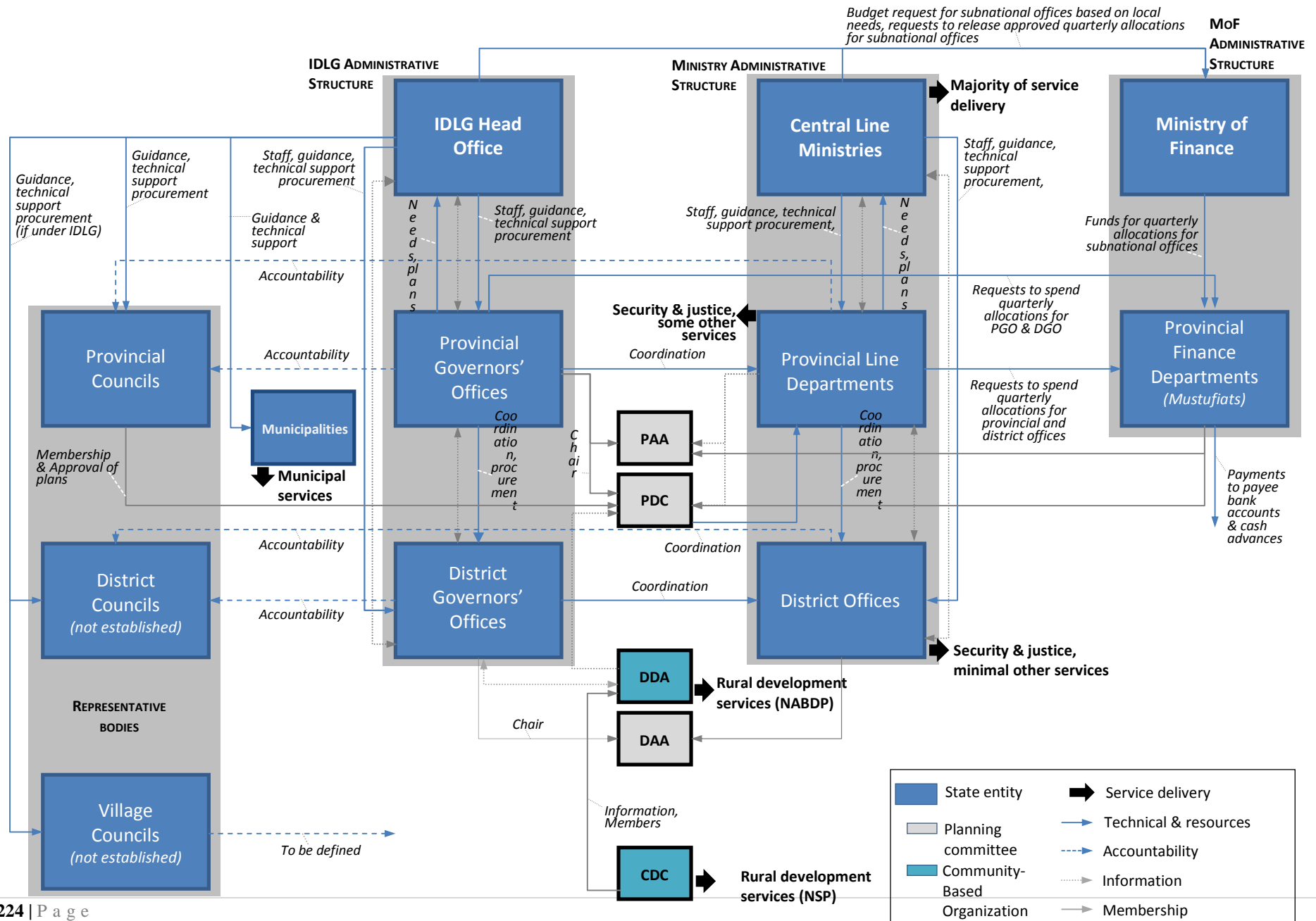
What is viable at sub national level is exceedingly complex. Currently there is very little in the law that regulates the relationship between the IDLG and the Governors’ Office. Three comprehensive recent reports prepared by international consultants ASI summarise all the current information known concerning the legal status of IDLG and its relationships with Governors and Provincial Councils, and administrations (ASI, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). The reports illustrate the uncertainty surrounding the whole of local government organisation:

The current legal framework for the Provincial Governors and Provincial Councils is uncertain and incomplete. Although draft laws being proposed are improvements on the current framework, they do not provide full resolution of all

of the questions or address all of the difficult issues related to Provincial Governors and Provincial Councils. However, given the century-long challenge of trying to strike an appropriate balance at the subnational level, it would probably be unrealistic to expect the Government to provide a final and perfect resolution of the political difficulties inherent in trying to administer Afghanistan's regions from the centre. (ASIC, 2013, p.91)

Figure 5.1 is an attempt by consultants working with the IDLG to depict the level of complexity at sub national level and is an attempt to demonstrate the subnational governance policy in practice (IDLG, 2010).

FIGURE 5.1 – SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN



The National Priority Programs (NPPs) of the IDLG (responsible for local government) and the Civil Service Commission that addresses civil service reform, building local government and promoting good governance therefore underpin a series of key stabilisation objectives. The GIRoA IARCSC NPP3 (2013) has an overarching objective to:

Strengthen the institutional, organisational, administrative and individual capacities of the Government at both central and local levels to enable more efficient and effective service delivery, economic growth, justice, stabilization and security.

Thus the Government also formally links government capacity to stabilisation and security through its own NPPs. This is not unsurprising as NATO-ISAF had embedded ‘advisers’ in both IDLG and IARCSC following the process of the drafting of the relevant NPPs. However, exactly which ‘good governance’ activities are critical to successful transition, and in what sequence they should be pursued, is only vaguely articulated around the need to improve ‘capability and accountability’. As can be seen from the previous chapter, no clear governance indicators are available, and metrics maintained by the military are near impossible to obtain. There are no indicators that clearly set out progress on public sector reforms other than PFM.

Furthermore, post-2010, very little additional support has actually been provided to the Civil Service Commission and IDLG to enable them to meet the requirements spelt out in the Transition Strategy. Both of the NPPs are seriously underfunded. IDLG reported to donors in December 2012 that 70% of their NPP sub-components were underfunded:

Given the level of resourcing, it is IDLG's estimate that it will be difficult or impossible to implement 19 of the sub-component clusters (70% of the NPP), given the current level of resources (GIRoA, IDLG, 2012, p.9).

The IDLG notes in its approved NPP:

In general, the PGOs and other structures are only part of the way through the transition from executing a traditional Afghan governance role (basically, one of resolving disputes) to executing a modern public management role (IDLG, NPP4, 2012, p.15).

With a continuing shortfall in development funds it is highly likely that progress on moving towards this ‘modern management role’ will take a considerable period of time.

Moreover, support to local governance activities, whilst highlighted as being of fundamental importance, is acknowledged as being sporadic and inconsistent, with some planned interventions not being discussed with government (IDLG, NPP3, 2010). It has taken until 2013 for the IC to rally behind the Government to support a single system of local representative bodies engaged in local government. Cabinet finally approved a National Policy for Unified District and Village Governance and Development in December 2013. Prior to this there was no policy – rather, a random collection of local representative bodies supported by different donor-funded projects over a period of ten years, leading to what one writer has coined ‘Shura fatigue’. It is not possible to build a local government system, a key component of good governance without support to the Government itself. The links to stabilisation operations have been made by Rathmell (2009, pp.8–13) who noted, in the context of how the UK needs to reform its military and government approach for stabilisation and Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations:

The fundamental success factor in the expeditionary stabilisation operations in which we (UK) will be engaged concerns building the effectiveness and legitimacy of the host government. We will always be a limited and often indirect influence on the population and the insurgents, even where we are the dominant military player. Yet, we will fail if the host government is ineffective, incompetent or thoroughly discredited.

The growing importance attached to getting local government administration right is also visible in the PRT Evolution Guidelines published by NATO-ISAF (2011). These guidelines are intended to highlight how the PRTs will close up and what they need to do before closure:

PRT evolution should facilitate the following minimal governance conditions: (1) basic public administration; (2) sufficiently responsive and realistic planning and budgeting and service delivery; (3) increasingly representative decision making; and (4) adequate rule of law.

Unfortunately, the guidelines are just that, guidelines. There is no ‘how to’ manual provided, nor guidance on the measures that indicate success or what is ‘basic’ administration. It remains to be seen what the PRTs will focus on for their remaining

days. As the ‘rush’ towards the transition gathers pace, the closure of PRTs has been brought forward. From a total of 26 PRTs, 16 of them were already closed by July 2013, six additional ones will be closed by end 2013 and the remaining four will be closed by end 2014. It is all over.

NATO-ISAF (2011a, pp.1–7) has also stated that the IC collectively needed to change the way in which it supports both formal and informal governance institutions, and change some of the focus of what it does, and where it does it with the intention of catalysing sufficient improvements in government and good governance to support the transition process between 2011 and the end of 2014. The official position of NATO-ISAF is therefore that improved civil service and administrative reforms at a sub-national level are therefore critical to achievement of the immediate stabilisation agenda and the ultimate transition goal. The report also noted, perhaps as an attempt to identify some of the administrative functions of a ‘viable’ state:

By the end of 2014, the Afghan state must be sufficiently capable to deliver some core functions at the local level through its own financial and administrative systems. It also must have sufficient accountability systems in place to sustain the checks and balances necessary to reduce corruption (NATO-ISAF, 2011a, para. 8).

With regard to civil service reform specifically, the report goes on to note:

Civil service reform is critical and the IC must implement the recommendation in the recent Presidential Commission to harmonise donor funded salaries. Technical assistance must be in line with the Civil Service Commission’s comprehensive Capacity Building Strategy, which includes provisions about the importance of a civil servant counterpart to ensure that capacity is built and the need for an exit strategy and measure of effect. (NATO-ISAF, 2011a)

By mid-2013, however, no substantive progress had been made on harmonised salary structures as outlined in Chapter 4. Many technical advisers continue to work mainly with temporary National Technical Advisers (NTA), and civil service training through the Civil Service Training Institute provided only a minority of civil service capacity building. As noted in Chapter 4, however, the IARCSC has been consistently sidelined even in the implementation of the CBR project.

The implication is clear that whilst record sums of money are invested in Afghanistan for projects that could potentially build CSAR and the strengthening of provincial government, district government and municipalities, very little of it is directed through the main responsible government agencies. Moreover, the continued use of off-budget funding of aid projects is puzzling given that the ability of the Government to manage on-budget funds is not in question. The latest PEFA Assessment (2013)⁸⁸ notes:

This 2013 PEFA assessment generally portrays a public sector where financial resources are, by and large, being used for their intended purposes as authorized by a budget which is processed with transparency and has contributed to aggregate fiscal discipline.

Most of the financial support for stabilisation-type activities comes from the US Government, and for the purposes of this research two recent projects are illustrative of the problems still facing the Government. These two multimillion dollar projects are:

1. Afghanistan Government Stabilization Support – AGSS (2013 onwards).
2. Stabilisation in Key Areas – SIKA (2012 onwards).

Under AGSS the US Government claims the project represents transition towards “stabilization for development”; it claims to put GIRoA in the lead, responding to the need for a major focus on developing the capacity of GIRoA through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). MRRD will then plan and execute effective stabilisation programming in support of GIRoA’s civ-mil strategy. The project note states:

The US government believes that the MRRD is the best ministry to partner with to build stabilization capacity because of its existing implementation capacities, geographic coverage, and a model (the ‘Kandahar Model’) that is designed to work in less secure areas.(USAID, 2013, p.1)

However, the staff of the MRRD is almost entirely made up of the ‘second civil service’. The implementing partner for the project will be the National Area Development Programme (NABDP), which has been implemented by UNDP for nearly ten years. In

⁸⁸ PEFA Assessments are only accessed through www.pefa.org

administrative development terms, MRRD is a project vehicle with a limited shelf life. It was created to be a vehicle to implement the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), hence the very limited numbers of civil servants working in the ministry. Most informed Afghan analysts would state that the GIRoA leading stability entity should be IDLG, but this would take the US Government too long to build up and support.

For SIKA, the US Government wishes to fund community organisations directly, driven by the fear of corruption in the Government. In regular development terms and in order to build government institutions, the majority of projects and service delivery should be planned and implemented by relevant line departments and financed through the budget; only a small amount of the total project/service delivery support should be channelled through the community. To do the latter undermines the Government and certainly does not build the institution. Even the US Government acknowledges its poor performance with SIKA:

The SIKA contracts stressed the importance of the programs being viewed as extensions of the Afghan government. However, USAID did not secure a formal agreement with key Afghan government partners until nine months after it signed the first SIKA contract. In addition, contractors for the four regional SIKA programs cited the lack of an agreement with the Afghan government as the reason for significant delays in program implementation (SIGAR, 2013).

Brown (2012) reviewed progress on the US Surge projects three years after they commenced in 2009. She suggests that the US achieved some localised progress, but did not achieve the strategic, sustainable “game change” in Afghan sub-national governance it purported to seek. This is because the surge was based on three initial US assumptions that proved unrealistic:

First, surge policy assumed that governance progress would accrue as quickly as security progress, with more governance-focused resources compensating for less time. Second, surge policy assumed that ‘bottom-up’ progress in local governance would be reinforced by ‘top-down’ Afghan government structures and reforms. Third, surge policy assumed that ‘absence of governance’ was a key universal driver for the insurgency, whereas in some areas, presence of government became a fuelling factor.(Brown, 2012, p.1).

Further to Brown’s comments, the presence of the Government alongside foreign troops has in places escalated the insurgency. The impatience of the US Government is referred

to in the Chapter 4 evaluations and other documents. General McChrystal, Commander in Chief Coalition Forces, was asked whether impatience in the US or incompetence in Kabul was a greater threat to the overall NATO-ISAF mission. He replied:

They go hand in hand. I think much of the impatience in the United States was derived from the perception of corruption and incompetence in Kabul, some of which was very real. And the more impatient America looked, the more the Afghans thought they were going to be abandoned. And when people think they are going to be abandoned, they go into coping mechanisms – they withdraw, steal money, put it in Dubai, do things which are going to take care of you when the rainy day comes or the government falls (McChrystal, 2013).

The immediacy of the stabilisation approach certainly does not match the pace at which PAR can deliver, especially in the sub-national context where public administration had traditionally never reached very much anyway. In addition there is, and remains, an overwhelming focus on a ‘physical projects culture’, which both creates a distorted picture of how government actually should work, and is pursued in the mistaken belief that building something, anything, somehow increases the legitimacy of the Government. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case. The latest SIGAR Report notes:

SIGAR’s investigators, auditors, and inspectors continually find serious problems that threaten reconstruction goals. For example, during this quarter, SIGAR’s audits questioned more than \$2 billion in spending and costs. SIGAR investigations led to two arrests, two indictments, two criminal informations, two court-martial convictions, and two guilty pleas. SIGAR’s ongoing investigations of fuel thefts in Afghanistan saved taxpayers approximately \$800,000 during this reporting period. These investigations, along with SIGAR’s audits, inspections, and special projects, highlight serious shortcomings in U.S. oversight of contracts: poor planning, delayed or inadequate inspections, insufficient documentation, dubious decisions, and—perhaps most troubling—a pervasive lack of accountability (SIGAR, 2013b).

Brown (p.2) believes that the real focus at local level should be on some key short-term achievable objectives such as training for government staff consistent with agreed government functions and a long-term commitment to local government, the civil service and systematic execution .

Cordesman (2012), examining maps available from the US Department of Defense, the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the NATO-ISAF command, and the UN,

attempts to make sense of Afghan government influence and success in aid and civil programmes. The maps detail metrics (indicators) that attempt to estimate the level of Afghan government influence and control, and the impact of aid programmes. He concludes they have been:

Inconsistent, often lacking in credibility, and fewer and fewer have been provided as the transfer of responsibility to the Afghan government has become a steadily more urgent issue.(p.66)

He refers to a number of figures produced by the US Government and others, concluding:

- The quality of Afghan district governance is so low that Afghanistan is not ready for any meaningful form of transition.
- The figures chart a decline in Afghan capability during 2010 to 2011, not an improvement.
- The figures clearly warn there were then no meaningful indicators of success in Afghan governance.
- Many charts and figures produced are simply ‘meaningless’.
- One chart purports to depict ‘governance improvement’ through merit-based promotions of provincial deputy governors and district governors that ignore the quality of the governors and which were never followed up with a map of success and the degree to which they were free of corruption and power broker character.

His dismal portrait concludes by way of reference to a figure that depicts ‘aid effectiveness’:

More than a decade into the war, aid effectiveness is rated largely by the size of the aid teams and how much money they spend. There is no meaningful mapping or estimate of their impact on development or the war (p.67).

This is not to say that no progress is being achieved at all at the sub-national level. The UK team in Helmand has demonstrated a change in approach. The Helmand PRT website, admittedly puffing the UK’s work, notes in July 2013:

The quality of public administration has also improved substantially: underway now are the first seventy development projects to be wholly identified and prioritised in plans drawn up by local communities supported by the Provincial Governors’ Office (not international advisers), and which are paid for by national-level funding drawn through Afghan budget systems⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ Helmand PRT website now closed off

The positive points indicated in this statement – local planning and budgeting, use of government systems – will however be too late to make a substantive sustainable change in the quality of local government. The UK PRT is already into the drawdown period and will be closed completely by the end of 2014. A report by Altai Consulting into district-level governance notes:

The future of district-level governance in Helmand remained uncertain, likely to be greatly influenced by the extent to which assistance and support from the British PRT is provided following its scheduled 2014 closure (Altai Consulting, 2013).

Additionally, the UK experience in Helmand concerns only one out of 26 provinces and cannot be described as representative of the whole Afghan experience with PRTs and stabilisation.

The suggestion that stabilisation, therefore, is pursued as a parallel track to the real business of building institutions is picked up by Van Bjiert (2009, p.3), who suggests that stabilisation efforts are largely separate from formal institution-building efforts and as a result they simply increase the existing ‘institutional multiplicity’. Van Bjiert is referring here to research at the LSE Crisis States Research Centre where Di John (2008) describes ‘institutional multiplicity’ as:

A situation in which different sets of rules of the game, often contradictory, coexist in the same territory, putting citizens and economic agents in complex, often unsolvable, situations, but at the same time offering them the possibility of switching strategies from one institutional universe to another. Often the interventions of the international community simply add a new layer of rules, without overriding the others. In such situations, the conventional political economy of state modernization – which suggests that if the state establishes an appropriate set of incentives and sends the correct signals political and economic agents will follow suit – is clearly insufficient.

The ‘multiplicity of institutions’ argument suggest that the IC complicates an already overcrowded landscape of actors making coordination ever more complex as actors jockey for position. Afghans working in the system will switch jobs and loyalties taking what is on offer from the highest bidder at any one time. Furthermore, the very nature of

stabilisation interventions and the associated insecurity means that the capacity development action required to build public sector 'capability' is difficult.

Furthermore, the difficulties of working in conflict zones have alienated many aid workers from delivery. Duffield (2010) notes that the tendency of aid workers to retreat from the challenges of work in difficult contexts is a long-term trend:

Since the 1990s, in response to the belief that aid work is becoming more dangerous, international aid managers have retreated into the aid world's proliferating Green Zones, the iconic image of which is the fortified aid compound ... the result has been a deepening paradox of presence

Such a 'virtual' presence goes some way to explain the mounting problems the US Government is experiencing in spending taxpayers' dollars. Further, and more difficult to quantify, is the impact of problems caused by military operations going on in close proximity to more regular development activities. In January 2012 video footage of US Marines urinating on the corpses of Taliban fighters came to light, leading again to the lockdown of civilian staff whilst street protests took place. Then the burning of copies of the Koran confiscated from Afghan prisoners in a US Government military camp incinerator in February 2012 led to an immediate reprisal by unknown Afghans who killed two military advisers working in a joint command centre in the Ministry of Interior. The killings led to all civilian advisers being pulled out of day-to-day working in the Ministry for two weeks, with limited working after that for an extended period. No sooner had agreement been reached to go back to ministries than an American soldier ran amok in Kandahar killing 16 civilians in a random act of violence⁹⁰. This led again to a withdrawal of advisers in ministries as reprisals by the Taliban were threatened. Each act such as this and numerous other 'credible' security threats lead to restrictions on movement. They are so frequent that the security officer for one multinational consulting company communicated, "it is so frequent we do not log the dates anymore"⁹¹.

⁹⁰ Accessed 12 March 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17343437>.

⁹¹ Personal correspondence.

The US civilian surge associated with the military surge was to create an impression that there were thousands of civilian aid workers working for Afghanistan. However, the vast majority of the foreign civilians are therefore hamstrung by the security concerns and are not working in the administration ‘building capacity’. The *Washington Post* (Jul, 2013) observed:

*Nearly all U.S. diplomats are confined to Kabul because of the shrinking footprint of the American military, which once protected and transported civilian officials. That leaves diplomats here with a predicament: How do they oversee billions of dollars in projects, most of which are far from the capital, when they can’t leave Kabul?*⁹².

Estimates of international TA in the central Ministries are rare but the World Bank (see table 5.1) has counted those in key ministries in 2009 and found a figure of only 147 – hardly a surge as shown at Table 5.1. There were more in the Ministries of Public Health and Public Works, but it is likely that the true figure is still below 200. The author maintains it is not possible to build a public administration for Afghanistan with this number of advisers.

Table 5.1 Estimated Numbers of TA in Key Ministries		
Ministry	National TA	International TA
Education	1248	11
Finance	300	71
Commerce	25	16
President’s Office	90	10
MRRD	1134	49

Source: World Bank (2009).

5.4 Summary of Findings

Saying one thing and doing another: stabilisation is ‘in denial’.

⁹² *Washington Post*, 29 July 2013. Accessed at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-afghanistan-us-diplomats-face-oversight-dilemma-with-troop-withdrawal/2013/07/29/50c1a39c-f088-11e2-bc0d-556690a86be2_story.html.

The IC links CSAR to part of an overall governance agenda, and is thus part of the fundamental underpinnings of a stabilisation agenda. It has claimed in every international forum, up to and including the TMAF, that strengthening of the civil service and wider public administration is of vital importance and a top priority. However, the government agencies responsible for the civil service and for local administration, IARCSC and IDLG, are underfunded, bypassed and often excluded from project interventions that are clearly within their purview. In defence of their actions many donors will point to low capacity of the Government and the incidence of corruption as reasons for their persistence in avoiding use of country financial and administrative systems, the very issues that need to be addressed in the short to long term. In the UK Government's Helmand Plan Review (2010), the summary notes:

the layer of competent GIRoA and ANSF personnel is very thin, and the loss of a few key people could have destabilising short-term effects. Building depth within institutions is important to building public confidence that GIRoA governance is sustainable (Helmand PRT 2010, p.6).

They seem to forget the 15,000–20,000 NTA paid for by externally funded projects, a resource which should be working for the Government's civil service.

Support to governance more generally is poorly articulated and there are recurrent problems with indicators and monitoring and evaluation. Baker (2009, p.81) notes that when US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke formally introduced his top civilian team for Afghanistan (to accompany the 'surge') at a Washington press conference on 12 August 2009:

Two aspects of his strategy remained vague: how his team would coordinate with the military effort on the ground, and how he would measure progress. When asked how he would know when the United States is successful in Afghanistan, he responded, 'We will know it when we see it,' seemingly ignoring President Barack Obama's commitment to identify clear benchmarks and milestones.

There are as many approaches to stabilisation efforts as there are PRTs. Stabilisation approaches are complex, purportedly following a WGA that is discredited, and are predicated on a high level of understanding of local context which is often not possible to attain especially in very insecure areas.

The possible links between stabilisation, social and political stability, and CSAR.

In Afghanistan the links between CSAR and stabilisation are unclear; indeed, there has been little exploration of the links. In 2002 it was proposed that the public service in Afghanistan was acting as an interim ‘social security safety net’ and needed to help stabilise the economy (UN, WB, ADB, 2002). The original estimate of 170,000 employees in 2002 was therefore allowed to rise, despite some early attempts to also clear out the civil service ‘deadwood’, as described in Chapter 4. The MAC considered public service unemployment as a potential source of unrest to be monitored carefully. In a stabilisation context such as Afghanistan, public sector employment is one of the few secure forms of employment, providing cash incomes for large numbers of households. Creating sudden unemployment *can* be dangerously destabilising. However, there is no research that examines whether unemployment and particularly public service unemployment could be a major source of political unrest and a further risk to stability. Likewise there has been little evidence produced on the impact of the recruitment of “too many public sector workers” in the political discourse and mainstream media. With transition approaching, the possible impact of unemployment, as aid significantly declines, has now entered the political discourse but it is too early to tell whether it will be destabilising.

The perceived problems with recruitment have, however, been persistent. Both the evaluations and other documents in Chapter 4 and the findings in this chapter suggest that patronage can act as a destabilising force. The effects of patronage and the perception that ‘plum’ public jobs have been earmarked for specific groups are suggested to have the potential for unrest. But there is little other than anecdotal evidence of the possible impact on stability. The Afghan experience echoes some of the findings in the literature review which suggests that the special circumstances of conflict-affected countries in the process of ‘stabilisation’ pose unique problems. ‘Stability’ operations and local politics do in some circumstances require politicised appointments and promotions, which can (but not necessarily) compromise effective administration, and may rightly be seen as further evidence of exclusion or corruption. New leaders with fragile legitimacy may

need to co-opt powerful competitors in order to consolidate elite buy-in to a stabilisation process. Such an occurrence in Afghanistan is referred to by Nixon (2008) and Van Bjiert (2009), who emphasise the political nature of provincial and district governors' appointments and their job security's links to the IDLG and ultimately the IARCS and President Karzai.

This suggests the importance of more context-sensitive approaches to key areas of CSAR, such as 'politicisation' of the civil service and the issue of patronage. There will likely be specific compromises and trade-offs to be made in a stabilisation situation. For example, there is little evidence that maintaining a strictly apolitical public service is essential for stabilisation or indeed development in the medium term. Rather, there is simply an assumption that a meritocratic civil service is a *sine non quo*. With a lack of evidence it is not possible to suggest an answer one way or another.

Problems with stabilisation both as a 'concept' and a 'driver' of reform and change.

The reality of Afghanistan is that many of the donors' key interests are not oriented to development, but rather toward the political imperatives of stabilisation and security. This was indicated back in 2002 by Duffield et al. (2002), commenting on the SFA. Successive attempts at stabilisation have included using 'aid' to promote security and stabilisation but with little tangible proof as to its efficacy. Alternatively, evidence to the contrary is growing. In their recent comprehensive analysis of sub-national conflict in Asia, the Asia Foundation, in a report part-funded by DFID, notes: "The interactions between conflict, politics, and aid in sub-national conflict areas are a critical blind spot for aid programs" (Asia Foundation 2013, p.2). They go on:

Some of the core objectives of development assistance – increasing economic growth, strengthening government capacity, and improving service delivery – do not seem to help reduce violence or resolve subnational conflicts. In some cases, they tend to exacerbate conflict. Indeed, many of the lessons that the aid community has learned from its engagement in fragile states – most notably the need to strengthen and extend the reach of state institutions – are actively counterproductive in subnational conflict areas (p.3).

This suggests that at the very least the concept of stabilisation is flawed or incomplete. This may be partly because most of the narrative on stabilisation has evolved out of the

specific cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, with an understandable attendant lack of conceptual clarity on the approach. International engagement in these two places there has been work in progress, learning on the job, with policy and implementation developed in a ‘disjointed incremental’ fashion. Lindblom (1979) coined this phrase a way of describing how practitioners get through many planning situations and dilemmas by essentially ‘muddling through’. On mentioning the phrase ‘muddling through’ to members of the IC in Afghanistan and Afghans themselves, there is an instant recognition of the realities of Afghanistan.

Lindblom’s 1979 thesis suggests two ways out of ‘muddling through’ or incremental approaches. The first is the need to stop fiddling and take big steps in policy; the second is to undertake more comprehensive analysis. The latter is based on the premise that some serious complex planning problems are never completely analysed, and neither is it expected they will be. The implications for this research are that thought must be directed more clearly about what is meant by strategic analysis of the problem, particularly the analysis of both strategic and local drivers of conflict. By their own admissions, many of the military commanders and other parts of the IC did not understand Afghanistan and many military personnel surely admit they are not development professionals, they are soldiers.

The gradual narrowing of focus of CSAR as a result of frustration with stabilisation efforts.

The narrowing of focus has resulted from a sequence of disappointments:

- The lack of progress in the early years leading to the Compact being signed in 2006, itself a disappointment.
- The lack of success with the military and civilian ‘surge’.
- The frustrations in making progress on governance, the slow progress and continual disagreements on the drafting of NPPs.
- The growing pressures from ‘home agendas’ for many donors.

All the above has led to a progressive narrowing of the development and stabilisation agenda. The joint focus of the IC has instead switched to achieving the necessary progress on an increasingly narrow governance agenda and a limited number of other objectives through the implementation of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) in 2012. Whilst progress on this agenda is now being made by GIRoA, the latter high degree of focus means that many other issues have now been sidelined, including CSAR.

Lack of conclusive evidence as to what works in a stabilisation environment.

The dominant political and security imperatives assumed by the stabilisation agenda, and the reaching of a satisfactory Afghanistan political agreement and a stable security situation across the country have largely dictated the pace at which ‘reform’ has been programmed and expectations set, but delivery has not matched those expectations.

There is evidence that CSAR interventions have been compromised in the Afghan stabilisation context due to a lack of analysis and understanding of context. Donors have distorted the basics of civil service management through their support to parallel structures, promotion of alternative salary arrangements and bypassing of national structures, as a result mainly of impatience and the need to focus on security issues. Senior Afghan leadership for CSAR at the provincial and district level does not exist and the appropriate capacity at sub-national level is still not in place to implement a complex reform programme. In all cases CSAR is in any event subservient to the interests of security and ‘stabilisation’. The complexity of the trade-offs involved has neither been recognised, examined in detail or dealt with.

The next chapter reports on the findings from the interviews and focus group discussions that attempt to explore deeper some of the issues uncovered in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 6 FGD and Interview Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the analysis of the FGDs and the interviews synthesised with other materials. The layout of the chapter is broadly in line with the framework for analysis introduced in Chapter 3. Section 6.2 introduces the approach used with the Focus Group Discussions and some further information on the individual interviews process. Sections 6.3–6.6 contain the analysis synthesising the feedback from both the FGDs and the interview data, supplemented with additional comments and observations noted from the research journal. The latter is a general mix of news and media reports, personal correspondence, personal journal entries and meeting notes maintained over an extended time period.

Section 6.3 looks at the legacies and context as a starting point, the legacies of the past including the trajectory of conflict, the inherited system of governance and public administration, the legal systems and body of legislation, the political legacies, the level of legitimacy and authority currently enjoyed by the Government, and what makes Afghanistan different from other FCASs. These factors shape the way actors see the situation and how the DNA of the administration and the political economy of Afghanistan is uncovered, or rather how one uncovers the art of the possible.

Section 6.4 looks at the dynamic factors and the evolving context. This includes understanding what is currently going on in Afghanistan and what has changed in the period 2002–12. This includes the evolving security environment, changes in the economy, growing links to the outside world, changes in the geopolitical context, and evolving political systems and settlements both internally and externally. It is posited that this changing context drives and modifies the approaches and aspirations of the International Community; it also shapes their interpretation of events. It will reflect the prevailing model of statebuilding and nationbuilding being pursued. It is likely to have an influence on or even dictate the highest priorities of the IC and the host government.

Section 6.5 reviews the approaches to PAR reforms undertaken by the various stakeholders. These are the specific reforms pursued by the International Community, government and other parties to improve public administration and specifically those civil service and administrative reforms, both implemented and planned. Section 6.6 looks at the PAR outcomes and achievements. This section looks at the expected results of the interventions and the actual results in improvements to civil service and administrative reform. It is here that issues around implementation come to the fore.

Section 6.7 looks at CSAR and the wider links to statebuilding, transition and stabilisation activities. This section also examines the links of CSAR relationships to, and impacts on, overall statebuilding, peacebuilding, transition and stabilisation activities. Section 6.8 presents the conclusions of the chapter.

6.2 The Focus Group Discussions – the Preliminary Investigations

Extensive preliminary investigations were carried out prior to the detailed research phase to help define the initial range of issues likely to be raised in the specific case study of Afghanistan, where, as previously stated, ‘context is everything’. Whilst the picture of public administration in a ‘typical’ Fragile and Conflict Affected Situation, as set out in the literature review (Chapter 2), is likely to be mirrored by events in Afghanistan, there are also specific circumstances in Afghanistan which will likely impact on the approach to the research, the data collection and the ways in which analysis is carried out. In this case and as a precursor to designing the research strategy, it was decided to complement the literature reviews (Chapter 2) and the primary documentation reviews (Chapters 4 and 5) with some focus group discussions to delve deeper into the Afghanistan specifics and help identify the issues likely to be faced by the researcher and the sorts of questions that ideally need to be in the interview questionnaire. The FGDs were also a way of headlining or framing many of the main issues and could also be triangulated with the information gleaned from the review of primary documentation.

These initial FGDs were held in the period January– February 2011. The questions were prepared for four groups and elicited opinions on the past viability and feasibility of

international support to CSAR. Participants were also asked about the difficulties of research and implementation in Afghanistan. The responses from donors, international PAR consultants, middle managers in the IARCSC and IDLG, and technical task managers in the European Union have been aggregated, presented in Appendix D and incorporated into the narrative below. The participants were all actively engaged in civil service and governance issues, and thus had a first-hand perspective on the issues. Following the FGDs a number of comments were received back from participants and processed along with the discussion feedback.

Each session was three to four hours in duration and arranged around a number of themes:

1. Legacies of public administration traditions in Afghanistan.
2. What makes PAR in Afghanistan different?
3. Interventions/approaches.
4. Have PAR interventions caused harm?
5. Specific limitations in PAR interventions.
6. Accomplishments.
7. IARCSC capability.
8. The way forward.

It is important to state that these sessions were used primarily as a way of seeking broad agreement on key issues for further analysis through the detailed interviews, i.e. the interviews delved deeper into the issues. However, and as discussed in Chapter 3, a FGD, a qualitative research technique, is a chance for group discussions that can help develop consensus around certain key issues. It thus has certain advantages over the individual interview. Powell and Single (1996, p.500) suggest

That the 'focus' underpinning the discussions is anything that engages the focus group in a collective activity ... simply debating a particular set of questions.

It was decided in this research that focus group discussions would be employed prior to the interviews and concurrently with the documentation review so that a full range of complex issues could be covered.

6.3 Legacies of the Past and the 2001 Context as a Starting Point

Afghanistan has experienced 30 years of sustained conflict; more than a generation of Afghans has missed out on development. As a result, in 2001 there were extreme skills shortages and a significant lack of organisation in the public service. But the situation was perhaps more complicated than simply a defunct and demoralised public service.

Figure 6.1 shows the main factors in play in 2001 as identified through the highest numbers of responses recorded in the coding framework for all the interviewees; these factors tally well with the findings from the FGDs.

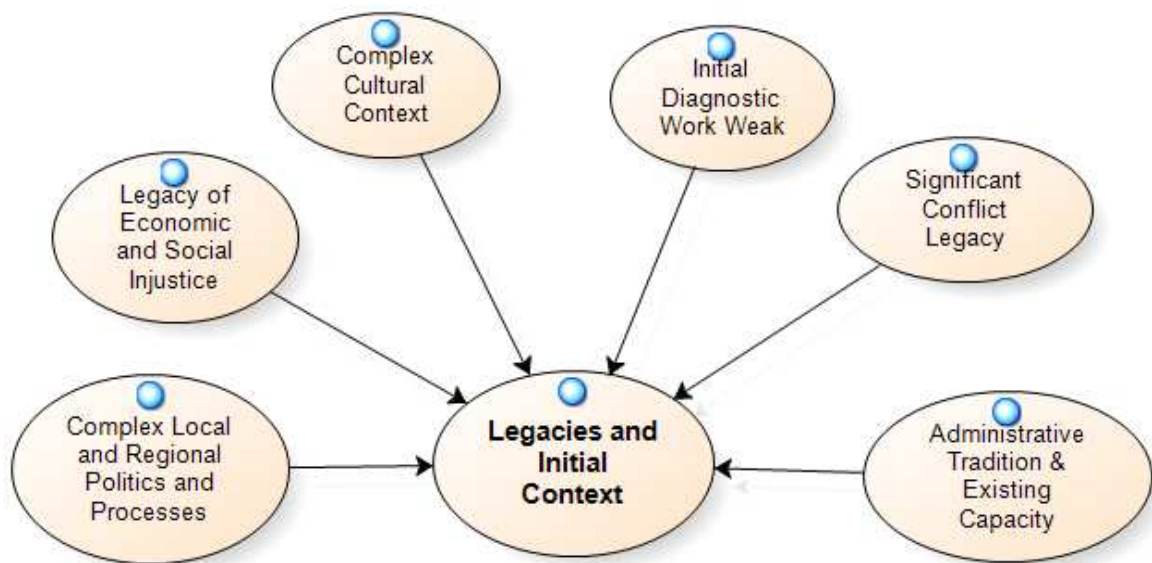


Figure 6.1 Factors that Influence Legacies and Context

Consultants took the view that Afghanistan never had functioning government and institutions, except in limited areas and mainly at the centre. At the centre there was an administration, but it was extremely formal; at the periphery it never really existed. But Afghans appear much surer that there was something tangible left; here is a typical comment:

The legal framework, the foundations were there from before – but there was a lot of distraction within the organisation and structures, people were exhausted with no changes within the political scene, so basically we needed to revisit the legal framework – the system – was a need for revisiting the legal framework but that doesn't mean there was nothing as a foundation. There was a legacy, the perception was wrong that nothing was there.

And, from a female Afghan

We were working with the Taliban. I was working at the time there– there was laws and regulations even at that time – History, there was a legal framework, there were legal people who were practising in the public sectors.

In 2001, the civil service was distorted with a high number of Pashtos in positions. This raises serious questions regarding to what extent the civil service represents then and now the 'federal' nature of the population. Admitting that this is the case might have meant a different methodological approach to PAR⁹³. Interviewees acknowledged that the past bureaucratic 'DNA' was still present but uniformly agreed that the service had been reduced to a shadow of its former self, with no new development, no training opportunities, destroyed facilities, and, as one Afghan deputy minister suggested, "*a bad culture as well as the old bureaucratic mentality*".

There were immediate high expectations and increased demands made on dysfunctional institutions. Interviewees noted that demands have simply risen over the years without institutions being able to catch up. In 2001 there were strong connection to fragile neighbouring states (for example, Pakistan, and Iran) and these connections are if anything more complex today, as witnessed by the increasing interest being shown in these areas by Western countries. The context is one of extremely complex politics in Afghanistan and the immediate region. The politics is accentuated by the complex cultural dimensions, the latter being only partially understood by the International Community. Most interviewees attest to the lack of understanding of the IC when they returned to Afghanistan in 2002.

⁹³ For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina the OHR ensured that the new civil service law addressed head-on the issues with a balanced ethnic representation in the civil service.

The problem of donors and advisers coming to Afghanistan with little background and staying only for a short while is picked up in statements by Afghans:

The problem is that DFID people, for example, do not have experience when they come to Afghanistan. The changeover of staff is always a problem for us. Donors generally and their implementing partners are variable and they are here for short assignments.

On arrival in Afghanistan, the international organisations began working on a rebuilding programme. The following quote is typical of consultant responses to the question ‘who led PAR reforms?’:

I think it’s mainly the International Community really, particularly the Americans I suppose and the donor community as a whole. The Afghans, yeah, in select areas there are people who are serious about reform and want reform to happen but then there are a lot of people who have said they want it to happen but don’t really mean it and are really in here for their own benefit.

Both foreigners and Afghans across the board typically understand the donors as having led the initial reforms. There was only variation in the amount of imposition, and the supplementary role of Afghan leaders. One senior Afghan official felt strongly that reform was imposed:

Reform was and is imposed upon us and it is a Western model led by donors but the donors keep changing their minds.

A consultant with vast experience from both Afghanistan and other FCASs suggested that perhaps Afghanistan’s problems were not ‘unique’, just very pronounced, though Afghan interviewees generally regarded Afghanistan’s plight as unique.

The poor understanding of context is referred to by interviewees, in numerous phrases such as *lack of research available, working very fast, lack of common understanding, too short term, lack of research capacity*. The interviews also demonstrate that the expectations of projects in the early years were completely unrealistic, and a number of respondents confirm that the EU and UNDP had a very unhappy start to their engagement with CSAR⁹⁴. The change of ‘style’ from what existed before to the new model of public

⁹⁴ Including successive heads of EU Operations in refreshingly honest interviews, and noted in official EU PAR Evaluations.

administration was only referred to by a handful of the interviewees who were employed originally in the Government in pre-mujahadeen times. One of them noted, looking back to the old times:

During that time there was a clear understanding of the rules and responsibilities, of functions in the ministries and in the Government. Now that understanding is not there, so we are not clear on the ministry functions, who is doing what, and who is responsible for what. Before that there was a clear understanding, who is responsible to make policy decisions and who was responsible for implementing the policy, there was a clear understanding of the different layers. Now it became obscure.

The interesting point about this quote is the link to later comments about the bypassing of the old civil service.

The history of Afghanistan administration is naturally more of interest to Afghans, and more of a reference point. In addition the legacies of past injustices weigh heavy on Afghan's minds, much more so than the interviews with foreigners. Afghans repeatedly refer to previous regimes, their achievements and failures. A senior Afghan human rights official reminded a FGD of past injustices and in a separate interview recalled the setting up of the first Government by President Karzai:

There was an outcry by the general public based on the national consultation that I mentioned. They said that their government officers should be free of any warlords; any human rights abusers.

The legacies of past injustices were not dealt with and they remain in Afghan respondents' minds, this creates a sense that current government is not legitimate, a problem compounded later by successive election fraud allegations. In the last two years before the transition date, there have been increasing instances of a wish to revisit those times and correct what many see as unfinished business:

The chairman of the parliamentary commission for the disabled and martyrs' affairs, Sayed Hussein Alemi Balkhi, told the gathering that all the applicable laws in Afghanistan demanded the punishment of the killers of the martyrs during Nur Mohammad Taraki and Hafizollah Amin's regimes. Alemi Balkhi asked family members of the victims to submit their complaints to parliament in a written way and demand the criminals' fair trial⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ Source: Afghan Islamic Press news agency, Peshawar, in Pashto 1347 gmt 25 Sep. 13 – reported by BBC Mon. SA1 SAsPol atd/aja.

The issue gathers pace in government today as well, as President Karzai chaired meetings of the Council of Ministers in September 2013 to discuss further the “extra-judicial killing of 5,000 people by the former communist regime”⁹⁶. The impending transition is regarded as having highlighted the need to deal with some of these legacy issues.

6.4 Dynamic Factors and Evolving Context

Figure 6.2 below is a composite diagram showing the principal dynamic factors affecting the progress of focus on PAR and CSAR in particular. Some issues are directly related to the public service such as increasing corruption, and a looming operations and maintenance fiscal crisis. Other issues are concerned with the deteriorating security and human rights situation, leading in part to a rapid expansion of donor funds in the period post-2008.

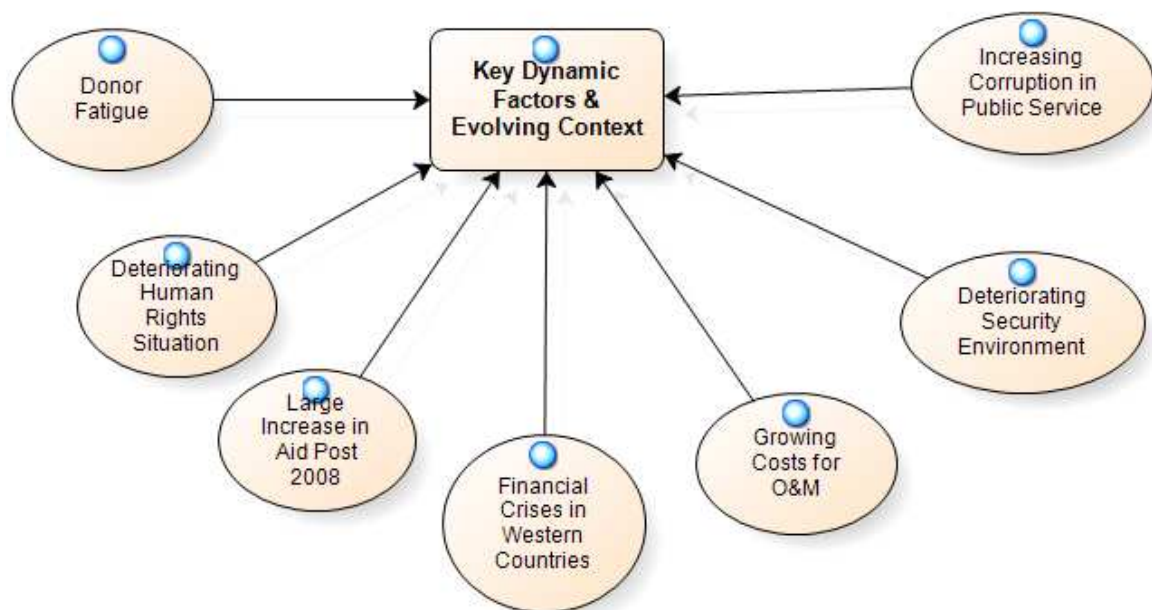


Figure 6.2 Key Dynamic Factors and Evolving Context

Respondents all noted the change in the security environment and the threat this posed to achieving any sort of reform, making projects more difficult to achieve and dominating the context in which any projects are designed and delivered:

⁹⁶ Programme summary of Radio Afghanistan news in Dari 1530 gmt 30 Sep. 13 BBC Monitoring Service.

You can't implement in the area where there is insecurity, you can't implement reform. One of the important things in reform is that you recruit on a merit basis but it is not possible in the insecure areas.

And in terms of the impact on ability to implement reforms more generally:

Unfortunately what you see is that because of the way things have turned out in terms of security during the last five years, specifically going from 2006/7 onwards, before that I think we were going to the right direction and if you look at the graph of development, reform, it was all looking really good but after that it started dropping. So since the last 5–6 years there is a big disappointment and uncertainty in the leadership.

The growth of corruption (a post-Taliban phenomenon) threatens to overwhelm any gains made in a fragile public sector. The continual allegations of corruption with the appointments process emerge clearly from the interviews. A particular problem in Afghanistan is the ethnicity issue with appointments of specific ethnicities in one ministry being matched 'like for like' with appointments in another. This is verified through the review of the primary documentation and is also verified in the media. The Afghan media outlets are constantly filled with allegations and counter-allegations:

Another allegation by the lower house is that most people in the Finance Ministry were appointed from a particular ethnic group. It is quite regrettable that some MPs raise such ethnic issues at a time when national unity is needed more badly than at any other time in Afghanistan. However, if their objective is to ensure social justice and have a plan for this to know how many people work in each ministry and to which ethnic group they belong and want to start this from the Finance Ministry, it is a good point ... the people of Afghanistan have the right to know about how people in other ministries have been appointed and the percentage of people from each ethnic group.

MPs also interfere with appointments, the article above continues:

A senior official of the Finance Ministry was quoted as saying that 149 MPs brought 1,748 applications to the Finance Ministry over the past one and a half years and more than 800 applications were filed by 30 MPs only. Only 27 of these applications are for development projects and more than 1,000 are for appointment of their desired people in customs houses and other departments⁹⁷.

⁹⁷ Source: BBC Monitoring Service, translated from Pashto 'Weesa' Afghan Daily Paper, Kabul 14 May 2013. In addition, personal correspondence with another two deputy ministers verifies that this is a regular occurrence.

The resulting network of corruption after 12 years of inputs has been fiercely criticised by both Afghans and foreigners; from one consultant:

Overall what's been created now is an amazing network of networks with multiple gatekeepers who can actually skim off the system so whoever wants to go into a ministry has to pay from the minute they approach the ministry all the way to wherever they want to go to, so it's a wonderful money-making system for all the different people that exist in it.

A senior diplomat noted:

I think there is an interest in civil service reform but there is a bigger interest in patronage.

From a senior IARCSC official

like the persons managing the Commission ...they are the top corrupt – I observe so many cases that people were very qualified and were not coming on board—but we receiving support to hire useless people

Coincidentally, during the period of interviewing, former Minister of Finance and would-be presidential candidate, H E Ashraf Ghani, had made an official speech claiming that patronage was one of Afghanistan's biggest problems. One diplomat noted:

The reason I keep going back to history is that this idea of erasing it is laudable but we do need to be realistic but the fact that Ashraf Afghani is saying that patronage is a major problem is almost an admission of failure and I don't mean that in a nasty, accusatory sense but it's good that he's raising that because I think certainly in the bureaucratic world I inhabit it's absolutely a norm and you can probably begin to erode it and start wearing it down a little bit but the idea that you can immediately go to merit-based appointments sometimes is a dream.

Patronage is linked to issues of corruption more generally. A senior Afghan involved in anti-corruption efforts notes:

Serious counter-corruption efforts are one of the commitments of the Afghanistan Government made in international conferences. The Afghan Government has established numerous anti-graft bodies, but it seems that these bodies have not produced expected results.

On corruption in the wider sense, in June 2012 in a speech to parliament, under great pressure from many quarters, President Karzai addressed the multiple fiscal scandals involving the Kabul Bank, customs duties, tax evasion, land usurping, chain assassinations, and money laundering, abuses of human rights and many other calamities. In July, he signed a comprehensive Decree instructing multiple government agencies to

address serious problems of corruption and report back to the Government and parliament in varying periods of between two and six months. The interviews suggest little progress and this is verified by media reports:

*President Karzai issued his Decree Number 45 exactly one year ago in which he ordered all government bodies to tackle administrative corruption, but experts believe that the decree has had no impact on curbing corruption*⁹⁸.

In one of the clearest and most explicit descriptions of both corruption and the unending hostility between the parliament and the Government, Interior Minister Lt-Gen. Mojtaba Patang Kabul announced publicly his intention to expose corruption in the Government and parliament; the latter had dismissed him from his post. Afghan Channel 1 reported:

*While bringing a no-confidence motion against him, lawmakers accused the minister of committing massive corruption and showing incompetence in dealing with security threats ... the minister spurned the parliamentary decision as unjust, calling it a joint conspiracy by drug smugglers, private security firms and some political circles. During his tenure, Gen Patang said he received from legislators as many as 15,000 requests, some of them illegal ... some lawmakers were in illegal possession of dozens of defence forces' vehicles, hundreds of weapons and arms licences ... the parliamentarians, in addition to having bullet-proof vehicles, had received permits from the ministry for more such vehicles, he alleged. The licences were meant for sale to others. Lawmakers also got orders for transferring 93 drug traffickers from one prison to another and took license for 232 taxis from the ministry, he said. There were 347 cases of exchanging licence plates among lawmakers, he said, adding the ministry transferred 430 individuals, including district chiefs, police chiefs, passport department, counternarcotics, crime branch and logistic officials as a result of recommendations by MPs. He claimed nearly 124 relatives and supporters of MPs had been sent abroad on scholarships. These were reasons for him being summoned, he said, accusing nearly 72 of legislators of land grab incidents and having links with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence*⁹⁹.

Perhaps surprising is that the calls for dealing with corruption cut across all parties. All interviewees regarded corruption and the untouchable senior officials as one of the biggest barriers to reform in the public service. Corruption extends across all areas of

⁹⁸ Source: Afghan Channel One (1TV), Kabul, in Dari 1315 GMT 27 July 13, accessed at BBC Mon. SA1 SAsPol Im.

⁹⁹ Source: Pajhwok Afghan News website, Kabul, in English 1435 gmt 22 July 13.

interest, patronage with appointments and issuance of government contracts, human rights abuses, land grabbing. With regard to land grabbing:

Civil society activists have called on the Government to disclose the names of those involved in land usurpation over the past 11 years. The civil society activists also called on President Karzai to take strict action against those involved in land usurpation in the country ... A number of circles in the Presidential Palace and parliament are making efforts to grant immunity to land grabbers in the country. Some civil bodies say that, currently, the land mafia have widespread influence in government bodies and the Government is not able to punish them. On the other hand, the names of major land grabbers are to be disclosed by the lower house of parliament next week¹⁰⁰.

All interviewees, without exception, stated they did not believe the Government was serious about dealing with corruption. Media reports, multiple evaluation reports and surveys endorse their views. Azizollah Ludin, chief of Afghanistan's High Office of Oversight and Anti-corruption, was interviewed by Ariana TV on 25 September 2013 and spoke about progress in curbing corruption in the country. Ludin said 244 cases had been forwarded to the Attorney General's Office over the past two to three years, with hundreds more cases in the pipeline. Many officials were implicated in the cases and yet progress with the Attorney General's Office was very poor¹⁰¹:

In Afghanistan ... the culture of conflict is pervasive and abuse of power is prevailing. We have legal framework, polices and mechanisms (even in parallel) exist, but yet corruption is just triumphing.

The corruption fuels discontent and reduced legitimacy of all the state's organs. A senior Afghan local government official noted:

I think there's a good percentage of people who doubt the legitimacy of ... the executive branch ... they have more doubts because of the prolonged crisis in parliament so people now believe and feel that this parliament is not a legitimate parliament because the issue of corruption this time, the issue of ballot rigging was more high and intensified than it was in the last term. And third, the issue of judiciary, judicial organisation. I think there are doubts; there are people who still question the legitimacy of these three judicial appointments.

¹⁰⁰ Source: Afghan Channel One (1TV), Kabul, in Dari 1315 gmt 25 Sep. 13 in BBC Mon. SA1 SASPol sgm/awo.

¹⁰¹ Ariana TV, Kabul, in Dari 1730 gmt 25 Sep. 13 in BBC Mon. SA1 SASPol 270913 ak/mh.

The importance of understanding the impact of corruption is that it establishes a ‘norm’ where patronage in government appointments is simply an extension to business. As one Afghan interviewee noted, patronage is evidently perceived as much less of a misdemeanor than assassinations and massive human rights abuse.

Growing donor fatigue is suggested to have emerged after experiencing poor results from CSAR programmes. It is also suggested consistently that the relationship between the donors and government was better in the early days and has deteriorated somewhat, especially post-2005. The following comprehensive response is typical:

The question seems to be optimistic that there is actually a good driving force for reform. I'm talking after ten years of being in this country and working in different sectors and different areas; government and non-government organisations and private sector, and after ten years I am not as optimistic as I was to think that there is a good driving force, that there is a good political will. It was at the beginning. Things were actually working well because the International Community together with the Government and some of the people as well who were just forming some of the civil society organisations and just came together, and after certain consultations they designed certain programmes and particularly the advisors who came at the beginning helping the Government where I believe they were higher quality than a lot of the advisors we get nowadays in the country. I've also been very vocal about the quality of diplomats in the old days. The Western community took Afghanistan much more seriously in those days than they have now. Afghanistan is now just a repeat; it's tiring, it's boring. Its fatigue and it's now also a lack of interest.

The issue about donor fatigue is clear from another Afghan respondent:

At the beginning there was really a will to change things for good in the country and I think now looking at that the term fatigue really applies partially.

And another response:

I think the early impetus has been somewhat dissipated on the International Community's side. I think people were very enthusiastic in the early days but when reform seemed to run into problems some of that enthusiasm waned. I think measuring the enthusiasm of Afghan colleagues is very much one where certainly there's no uniform enthusiasm.

6.5 Approaches to PAR Reforms

The interviewees referred frequently to donor-led designs, Western models, best practices, a focus at the centre, capacity building efforts, and attempts to use country systems. These all resonate with a typical normative civil service reform agenda as noted in the primary documentation review and confirm that the primary focus of the reform programme was on the basics of civil service management. Figure 6.3 below is a composite diagram showing the main approaches to PAR

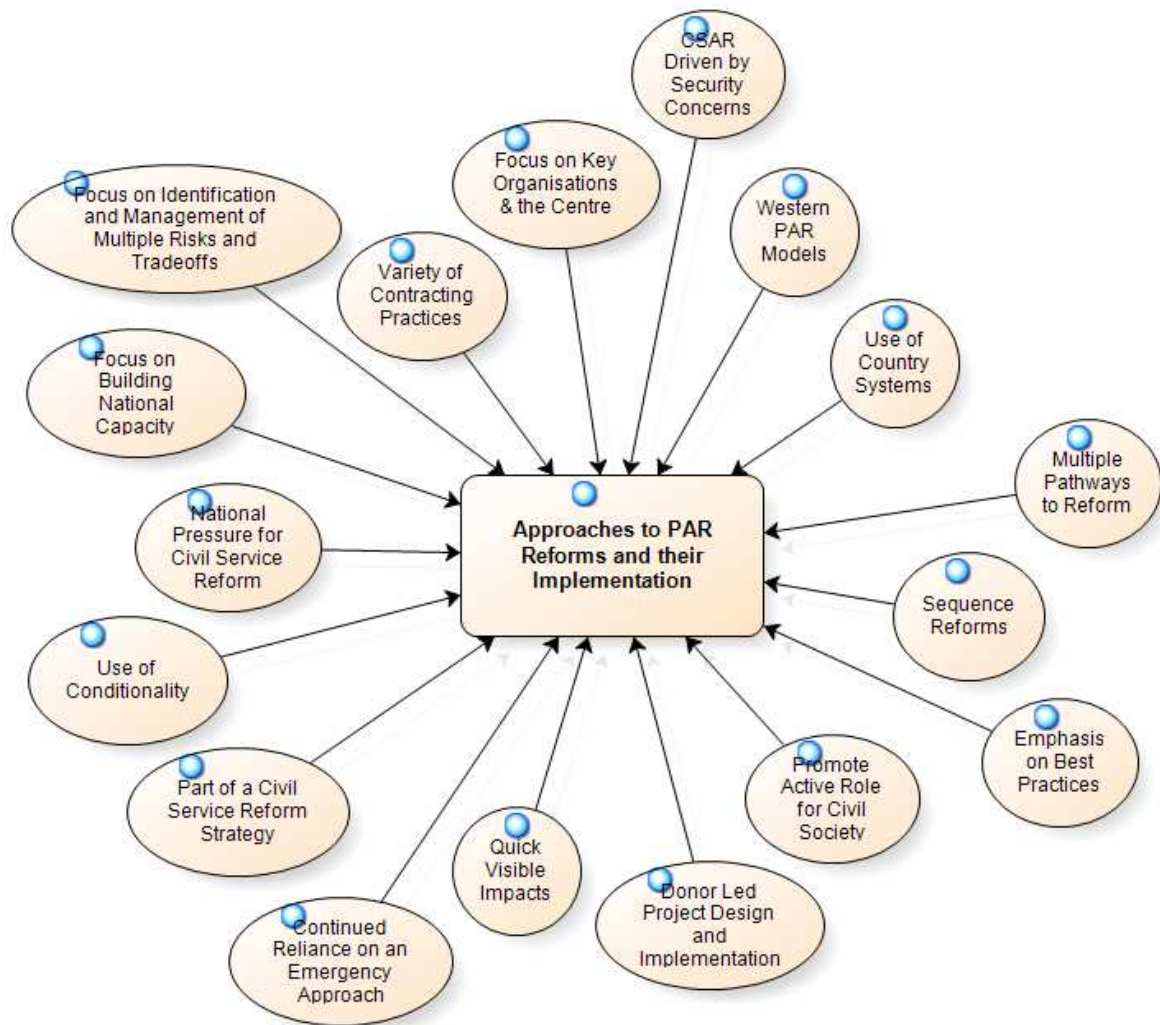


Figure 6.3 Approaches to PAR Reforms and their Implementation

The following comment is typical:

Here we've got much bigger problems because you need basic levels of literacy just to run basic public administration. So that is going to get easier with time. My problem here is that you'd need to be careful about trying to introduce an

overly sophisticated system that the Afghans cannot manage. Our focus has to be on the basics. We've seen a bit of that in the Americans who do certain things that are just too complicated. We've had better successes by being just a bit less sophisticated.

Many interviewees refer to the complicated nature of some reforms that required a minimum level of communications in English with counterparts. Initially when foreign experts came to Afghanistan they therefore needed to talk to English speakers. Senior officials in the Afghan Government consistently refer to the tensions this caused, a flavour of which is presented in the quote below:

The old guard really resented not being consulted by the foreign experts; obviously there was a language barrier which was never passed. The new Afghans, the young Afghans resented the old guard for not sharing with them the secrets of running, making the ministries function.

Herein, lays the start of the issue of the parallel or 'second' civil service. From an Afghan official:

The International Community did not give the opportunity to the existing civil service, instead investing in young returnees who spoke English and found themselves in director roles. Tashkeel management positions were captured through lateral entry. Most of the lateral entry people have now captured the high positions. It would have been better to make more use of the core tashkeel early on as they have now become very uncooperative.

And from a consultant in the Civil Service Commission:

I think largely they bypassed it {the core civil service} because they couldn't speak to the old guys who had been running the administration for the 20 years everyone had been away and that's because of the language issue so I think that that was a great, huge loss because these people couldn't speak English and they didn't know how to use the computers. They lost out and so did the International Community because they didn't consult them. Instead they like the suited, booted English speakers.

Similar statements are included in other interview transcripts. Early approaches to reforms were not uniformly welcomed and continue to provoke some debate. A number of both Afghan and foreign consultants pointed to the disagreements:

I think to some extent some of the Afghans felt like it needed to go a bit more slowly so some of them did think, was perceived in some quarters, as an imposition. For example, I remember in a weaker ministry, the municipality and the ministry of urban development the imposition of the whole PRR systems and

the open recruitment was fought tooth and nail but that was for their vested interest and there wasn't a lot of leadership in that case.

And another senior staffer from the IARCSC:

We started with PRR and P&G and installed the CSC. The leadership, and staff like me believed that these programmes were not based on our interest and understanding. It was an imported design from somewhere. This is why in the beginning they did not get the ownership and sense of responsibility.

And from another donor Head of Mission:

although I do think there was quite a lot of foot-dragging which sounds like an accusation but I really mean in it the sense of not being in agreement with proposals and therefore not pursuing them vigorously ... there are also major tensions within the Afghan systems about the way PAR reforms should be going, that shouldn't be underestimated either.

The disagreement seemed simpler to some Afghan civil service counterparts who felt the whole project was going too fast:

There was an unrealistic desire for speed in completing a complex public sector legal framework that cannot be managed or met, not even in an advanced Western economy.

And another view on the need to allow time for cultural changes to take effect:

We brought lots of reforms but still the performance of the civil institutions has not changed, so what is the problem? The problem is culture; you need to give the room for cultural changes in order to change behaviour and improvement ... that also takes a long time.

A key Afghan 'reformer' in the early years suggests that on the Afghan side the speed was partially supported by Afghans who wanted reforms to be in place so that those that followed could not undo reforms:

You should've continued with the same programmes of reform but maybe a slower pace. Redoing the timetable to do it slowly, but I know the reason that it was done that way. Because there were a few reformists in the Government in those days, I was part of that group for a while and what we were looking at and the way we were thinking and judging was hey guys, you are not going to be here tomorrow, they are going to get rid of you. Build the system in a way that no matter who comes they cannot steal the money and these people, the people of the country are served properly.

This view was corroborated by another:

Because we were too much into reform, we were actually blocking the evil's progress; evil meaning the corruption, self-centred, some of the warlords, and some of the non-warlords who had found their way into the system. Those sorts of people are going to find power and they are going to get rid of us. There will be less reform in this country so therefore let's concentrate on the reform while we have power.

And again, a slightly different view – a suggestion that some culture and traditions needed to be kept:

I think we have tried to break those traditions and tried to replace them with something else and that's one of the reasons for the limited success.

The early opportunities to get reforms started were lost, perhaps not just because the required rate of change was not met but also because of a lack of political will at the top and also in the ministries. A senior official from the IARCSC notes:

The chance was lost in the beginning of the reform process, when we established the reform, the reorganisation and the restructuring was a major part of the reform, that willingness to do it and also technical support in order to do that, we lost that support ... this led to failure of PRR; that was a big failure ... so we didn't have a strong political support, second was also the question of the capacity in the commission, understanding the process and the ownership. The ministries were thinking the reform is not their business but the business of the commission.

And from another official who noted the demise of the MAC and the fact that the Chairman of the Commission no longer sits in Cabinet:

At the beginning we had a very good system established – we had ministry advisers, the MAC and a bunch of reform-oriented ministers were giving advice for the commission and also for report to the cabinet. This was a help for the commission in terms of defending in the cabinet whatever policy or programme, or problem that has created, but that was all demolished, no more MAC and this undermined the independence of the commission – the commission doesn't have the representative in the cabinet – he doesn't sit in the cabinet and he sees only the President.

And:

When you talk to different ministers and ministries about the vision, objective and functions they have a mixture of understanding of all of this. So there is no unit or actually a centre that can coordinate all these policies together.

It is not just senior Afghan leadership who were not listened to, Practitioners interviewed made the point consistently that in any event their advice was frequently not listened to and there was a lack of consultation over policy development and strategic planning in key interventions, partly due to frequent donor staff turnover but sometimes due to inexplicably poor (or no) decision-making.

As noted in the literature review and documentation review, appropriate research and analytical work is extremely important to the understanding of reform contexts, but the lack of sharing of documentation is a recurring theme. One senior official noted wryly:

We know the donors produce a lot of studies such as audits, evaluations, governance, risk assessments and fragility assessments and the like, but they do not share them with the Government, they keep them to themselves or share only with other donors.

Consultants especially noted the lack of interest shown by some key donors in more substantive research. One consultant cited DFID as having cancelled a research project because the academic concerned had suggested that the study needed to be significantly longer and deeper in order to be thorough enough to stand up to rigorous testing. Research organisations have struggled to obtain money for local research initiatives, donors preferring to invest in their own consultants and their own needs. The problem with a lack of sharing information is an enduring theme. This from a senior Afghan official:

The meeting that I had earlier, it's one of the American government organisations that's basically commissioned this company to come and research on civil society and now if I'm not mistaken, if I don't exaggerate there are at least two or three assessments on civil society every year for the last ten years and then what happens with them? I was actually asking one of the people that came earlier. I said what's going to happen with the result? Are you going to share it with people? And then she said part of it we will share, part of it is not going to be shared. Basically the assessments are done and they are shelved. For example, John Smith came and did the assessment and shelved it after that and whoever came did another assessment and shelved it; they didn't share.

And:

If we want to do anything I'd rather sit and compile all of them and everybody should take their assessments out and put them on the table. Let's say who said what at which year, who's right, who's wrong and let's just take something out of all of them to produce one paper and share it with the entire world so that no other advisor comes here wanting to do another assessment.

Interviewees and the FGDs referred to inappropriate models of public administration applied where “selected tools and methodologies from the ‘west’ are applied”. The suggestion is that they do not pay enough attention to the evolutionary nature of these processes. In a number of instances there is a suggestion that certain types of consulting approach may make matters worse. Additionally, there are tensions between consultants (trying to meet targets) and the host institutions who are being told by donors that they ‘own’ the process, that the consultants ‘work for them’, when in reality the relationship is much less clear. The quality of consultants was also challenged:

Some consultants were not very high quality; some were very poor, very variable. People who were carrying out consultancy were not aware of the reforms in terms of organisational, development institutional perspective. Some wanted to ‘replicate’ here in Afghanistan, bringing best practices but without understanding the Afghan context, in terms of our capacity and cultural understanding. It was a mix. But to be fair they tried. A lot of money was not used effectively for the reform process.

On the other hand there were frequent comments from consultants on meeting the demands of donors focused on results. For example:

DFID is moving increasingly towards demonstrating VfM¹⁰² which means a focus on outputs, milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs). Payments are made on contract milestones and mean a relentless focus on delivery of commitments”.

There is plentiful evidence of problems with the implementation of projects both from the partner in government:

There are always gaps in-between projects – it is impossible to get continuity. The IC would not allow this to happen with their own reform projects at home so why do they expect us to manage here?

¹⁰² Value for Money

And also from the consultants who naturally have a focus on the contracting issues. A typical comment from a major company is:

Such gaps cause significant damage which reduces the VfM of DFID's expenditure, sometimes substantially. Gaps can cause this damage in multiple ways including loss of credibility with the Government, loss of staff, loss of continuity, loss of momentum, it's really a disaster and it happened frequently.

Plans, either their presence or sometimes their lack have come under fire. With regard to the Kabul Process and the production of new priority plans, the NPP3 is the one for CSAR and it has taken nearly three years to approve. A consultant notes:

In the case of NPP3 (efficient and effective government)... it took that length of time to get the draft agreed – yet the final draft was produced in a matter of weeks, following a very protracted process to agree what needed to be in the NPP, with donors repeatedly repudiating drafts which they felt were not reflective of the reality in terms of existing programmes, and the budget was excessive. Underlying that was, in my view, poor communication between the two sides and a lack of real commitment and a process to work together on the draft.

The problem of the timing and content of NPPs, and the funds available to implement them, is covered in Chapters 4 and 5. On the issue of the influence of donors, the problems with aid coordination and thus the effectiveness of aid are documented extensively in Chapters 4 and 5. The rapid rise in money for projects and particularly in the period post-2008 fuelled donor inputs to hiring more and more national staff, resulting in the creation of a parallel civil service whose growth is accelerating:

This is taking responsibilities from civil servants, the opposite of capacity building. Delivery is becoming increasingly reliant on these TA. Civil servants are feeling marginalised. PAR is undermined by this. Direct hiring of Afghans by donors exacerbates the problem further.

A senior IARCSC official:

It is not good to have a multiple system of salaries in terms of its management, motivation, and of incentive. You have seen we had a number of donors approaching the people and the Government has to keep the structure up and running. But what I see is we will come again back to harmonisation.

There are one or two dissenting voices in the donor community who do not see the national TA as a problem:

In Afghanistan what you get is underpaid civil service and perhaps overpaid technical assistance but as such the model for the future can't be a return to full civil-servant-operated ministries but that's controversial, I think because consistently you get the message that tashkeel is the real thing.

And a dissenting view from an Afghan:

But what I agree with, I know it's a huge amount of money spent on MCP and on managers. I've actually seen good things coming out of those MCP positions. There's a lot of people who have capacity, not all of them again of course. Some people are appointed because they are related to somebody; nepotism of course plays a part always but in most instances I've actually noticed that it helped; to top up the salary, to encourage people from inside the country and outside the country to come and take responsibility.

'Too much money' is a common refrain:

I think donors have allocated far more than we needed. I think the funds supplied, the support given was overwhelming. Too much too soon and too much mismanaged.

The consolidated picture is one of a donor community with no clear or coherent strategy. A plethora of donor organisations are working ostensibly to strengthen and improve systems, but the overfunding overwhelms the absorptive and administrative capacity of the Government. A typical quote from one Afghan official notes:

There are many reasons for ineffective coordination. It is a massive coordination mechanism and unclear ToRs associated with a lot of duplication and overlaps as well as weak practices of follow-up and reporting. This mechanism in some cases did not do enough to incentivise coordination, it was time-consuming and that decreases the participation of the members or assignment of ineffective members and non-productive participation. These days I have now had another document that states the further multilayer coordination mechanism introduced by the Policy and Clusters Coordination Section of Ministry of Finance, it's too much.

Criticisms include poor coordination across the board, between donors, the GIRoA and consultants. There are overlaps and duplication in interventions and the suggestion that donors lead too much; focus in some areas at the expense of others; and make demands without working with the Government and each other on what the priorities are. Interviewees mention fast turnover of donor staff, 'constant churn' leading to loss of institutional memory and a reinventing of the wheel.

The failure of the aid effectiveness agenda is not surprising if you believe the following analysis. One MoF Adviser explained, in terms of the ongoing struggle for control of the aid management agenda:

The reason is ... the normal rules do not apply here. GIRoA does not have complete control and is subject to donors' will, even for their own aid policy! Specifically, this AMP has to be tabled for, and endorsed by, the Standing Committee for Governance and subsequently the JCMB, with the aim that it will be part of the GIRoA paper for Tokyo. Every donor has to therefore agree to its contents. If the SC or the JCMB do not endorse it, the AMP will be dead in the water before implementation. Putting aside whatever we feel about the bizarre set-up that GIRoA and the donors have agreed to since London 2006 where ownership is trumpeted but donors have to endorse everything, we will ultimately have to work within its structure and structures.

The lack of conditionality attached to CSAR by donors is referred to by Afghans as well as CS reform consultants. One official notes that conditions attached to CS reform were previously effective:

Yes, that conditionality was important because we had previously similar conditionality from the ADB and WB that has improved lot of things like the civil service law, ministry HR structure ... those were things that the commission was forced to concentrate on the outcome... in developing clear outcomes.

6.6 PAR Outcomes and Achievements

Interviewees all recognised that some progress had been made on establishing basic systems of public administration, especially in the area of improved financial management, albeit with the caveat of increasing corrupt practices. Figure 6.4 below is a composite diagram showing what has been achieved in the main

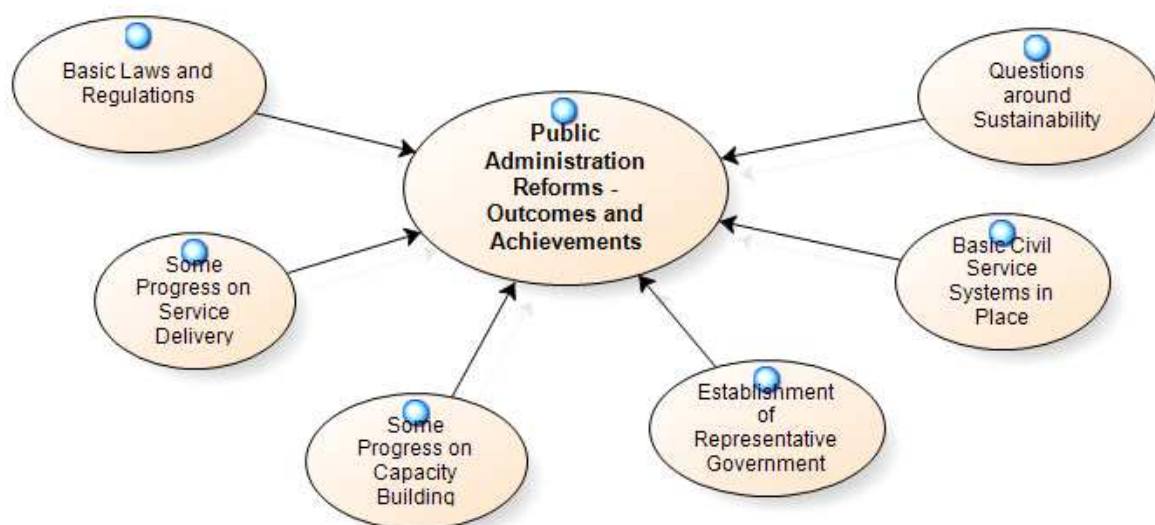


Figure 6.4 PAR Outcomes and Achievements

There have been some achievements that must not be underplayed. All respondents conceded that there have been gains in the capacity of government staff and a major achievement is that basic civil service systems are in place, though there were significant reservations about the civil service law and the slow pace of implementing civil service regulations. Also improvements in basic services and service delivery have been achieved.

Estimates of improvements in ‘capacity’ exhibited a mixed response. From one senior official, who believed the capacity was there, and would have grown quicker had donors used country systems more:

In terms of capacity, we believe that capacity not only exists in the Government but in some cases we do see that the Government is way ahead of our respected donors. In relation to building of capacity at the local level it is perceived to be low, given the lessons we have learned and in particular those of the lessons we learn through the District Delivery Programme, capacity is effectively being built by utilising our current capacity, rather than setting up out-of-structure supporting ‘cells’ with multipliers of salaries and ineffective practices of so-called mentorship. The same model is applicable in building systems and institutions; you can improve current systems and institutions by using them. This way we use the systems, identify deficiencies, will fix the weak parts and will give the civil servants the chance to practise more of owning the practices, of using

and improving the systems and institutionalise the good practices and shaping tools and systems to support improved performances.

On achievements, an Afghan official notes progress on capacity development and development of some modern civil service systems:

So capacity development is one area, secondly the development and upgrading of our current systems. I think some of the practising systems here are very old and we have modernised those systems, those practices.

However, the focus has been on establishing institutions that give the ‘appearance’ of government. The suggestion is that civil servants do not believe there is a real career structure, transparency and a level playing field. Therefore they take what they can, when they can. Interviews revealed individual examples of good relationships and cooperation within PAR projects but, consistent with the findings described above, performance was patchy. A consistent response was that the attempted whole of government approach to PAR has been poor with little evidence of a consistent strategy. A senior foreign official claimed that there was an attempt at coordination and the lead role was placed with the World Bank, as has been verified from other sources:

The big players in all this are the EU, the World Bank, ourselves and the Americans. So, we’ve tried to push stuff through the World Bank ... using them as a coordinator... yes, using them ... put the money in there and using them as a coordinator. We’ll see how it works. It’s still early days yet.

The suggestion, therefore, is that the Bank has had a long-time lead role in CSAR. A senior donor representative notes that perhaps efforts did not focus enough on outcomes:

It’s been too process-orientated rather than outcome-orientated in many cases and the huge amount of energy that has been spent on plans and replans and tables and grids and flowcharts and God knows what else and meetings especially, might perhaps have been used more productively in a number of cases.

The IARCSC itself admits that its own agency strategy is well out of date but believes it will be appropriate to adopt a new strategy following agreement on the NPPs. All those consulted agreed that most key elements of PAR, except perhaps PFM, are dysfunctional, and IARCSC now experiences a lack of trust and legitimacy from its constituents; this perception was more acute amongst the IC than staff of the IARCSC. IARCSC leadership is at times perceived as weak and easily swayed by political expediency and pressures

from both government and donors which can result in difficulties in fulfilling its mandate as the pivot for the PAR. Its reputation for corruption has spread far and wide and those honest staff still in the Commission are submerged beneath the poor reputation.

As a result the pressure on the IARCSC has grown almost daily. Media reports on the work of the Civil Service Commission have consistently reported on alleged ‘corruption’ in recruitment, selection and appointments. In April 2013 this criticism escalated to a suggestion by the Afghan parliament to abolish the IARCSC. The *Hasht-e Sobh*¹⁰³ in Kabul reported on April 20 2013:

According to various media outlets, the efforts of Parliament are underway to disband the Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission (IARCSC). According to some MPs, despite a lot of expenditure, IARCSC hasn't had any particular achievement. Likewise, the complaints on giving preference to ethnic issues, selling the posts for money and not taking merit into consideration are some of the other issues associated with the department. According to a report released by BBC Persian, the IARCSC officials apparently believe that there are political reasons behind the disbanding of the commission, and the displeasure of some of the MPs is due to their orders being rejected. On the contrary, the IARCSC officials reject that there is corruption in the commission and have defended the achievements of the commission in the past several years. The media outlets have quoted government officials saying that there are issues like illegal demands by the MPs such as to appoint their friends and relatives in government posts. (Hasht-e Sobh¹⁰⁴)

The following is an excerpt from a senior official in the IDLG noting the continuing risks posed by problems with the appointment of governors:

Risks associated/assumed with transition are not limited to the activities that are going to take place during the process of transition. Instead some of the issues have continuously proved a risk that fuels discontent and disappointment in the communities as well the government officials. I want to share some examples, which have similar examples in other ministries and also in the judiciary. The current/existing procedure of appointment/removal of the provincial governors is a risk, which needs to be corrected or at least raised during transition. Some of the provincial governors despite being incapable, not committed and/or corrupt

¹⁰³ Afghan independent secular daily newspaper, 20 April – informal translation from Dari, author Salim Azad.

¹⁰⁴ Afghan independent secular daily newspaper, 20 April – informal translation from Dari, author Salim Azad.

continue to remain in office. This leads to nomination of similar district governors, fuels discontent among communities and corruption among government officials at district and provincial level. Another good example is lack of a systematic monitoring approach of the Supreme Court and Attorney General's Office to prevent corruption in their officials. Same is true for National Department of Security to prevent misuse of power and human rights abuses ... I want to remind everyone the good days of 2004 and 2005, in which we did not have similar level of vacant positions at district and provincial level and not similar level of insecurity in the most insecure areas of today. Incompetency on behalf of the Government (especially the agencies mentioned above) actually provided opportunity to insurgents' appeal, which can happen again if not prevented by addressing the root causes.

Consultants felt that donors and the Government wanted more of an emphasis on formal procedures rather than outcomes. The outcomes of such an important programme as pay and grading would normally be of high importance but the whole exercise has taken five years so far and is still ongoing. Many senior Afghans demonstrate little interest in it, and this is unsurprising as they tend not to benefit from it, being paid under the parallel civil service arrangements. Enthusiasm for updating the civil service law also seems to be weak. One consultant observes:

As far as I am aware the P&G scales have never been revised since 2008 and as that is five years ago they will have run out of incremental steps this year. So the current scales are still the same. By the way the new civil servants law is still languishing in MOJ, two years from being drafted!.

That the CSAR has been marginalised is confirmed by numerous interviewees, in all groups. One interviewee focuses on the dominance of other agendas:

Civil service and administrative reform issues can also become crowded out of the policy agenda, especially in a country recovering from conflict when other agendas are being pushed; this is certainly the case for Afghanistan.

6.7 Wider links to Statebuilding, Transition and Stabilisation

Activities

There were a number of questions in the interview guide that probed for views on the links between PAR and the transition and stabilisation activities. The answers illustrate wide links and the complex nature of the questions raised. Figure 6.5 is a busy diagram consolidated from multiple responses.

The multiple links noted in the answers contained in the interview analysis attest to the complicated nature of the international mission in Afghanistan. The interviewees consistently referred to what they saw as a lack of a clear statebuilding vision, and an unclear agenda both from the Afghan side and of the IC. A typical response from a deputy minister:

It's hard for the civil service commission to really restructure the civil service in a fashion that can correspond to a certain vision because there's no vision as such.

However, some responses were nuanced:

There have obviously been winners and losers but the vision of a strong democratic state very much in the mould of how it's conceived in the West is not altogether the dominant tribe for Afghans. I think for them it has been very much a patchwork of where there are coalitions that need to be pulled together; they will do so but it's not necessarily in the context of that kind of Western idea of a strong democratic state.

And from another deputy minister, the suggestion that the Government had a vision but not a realistic plan:

I think we miss an action plan. We held the broader vision, but what we miss, we lack, is an action plan.

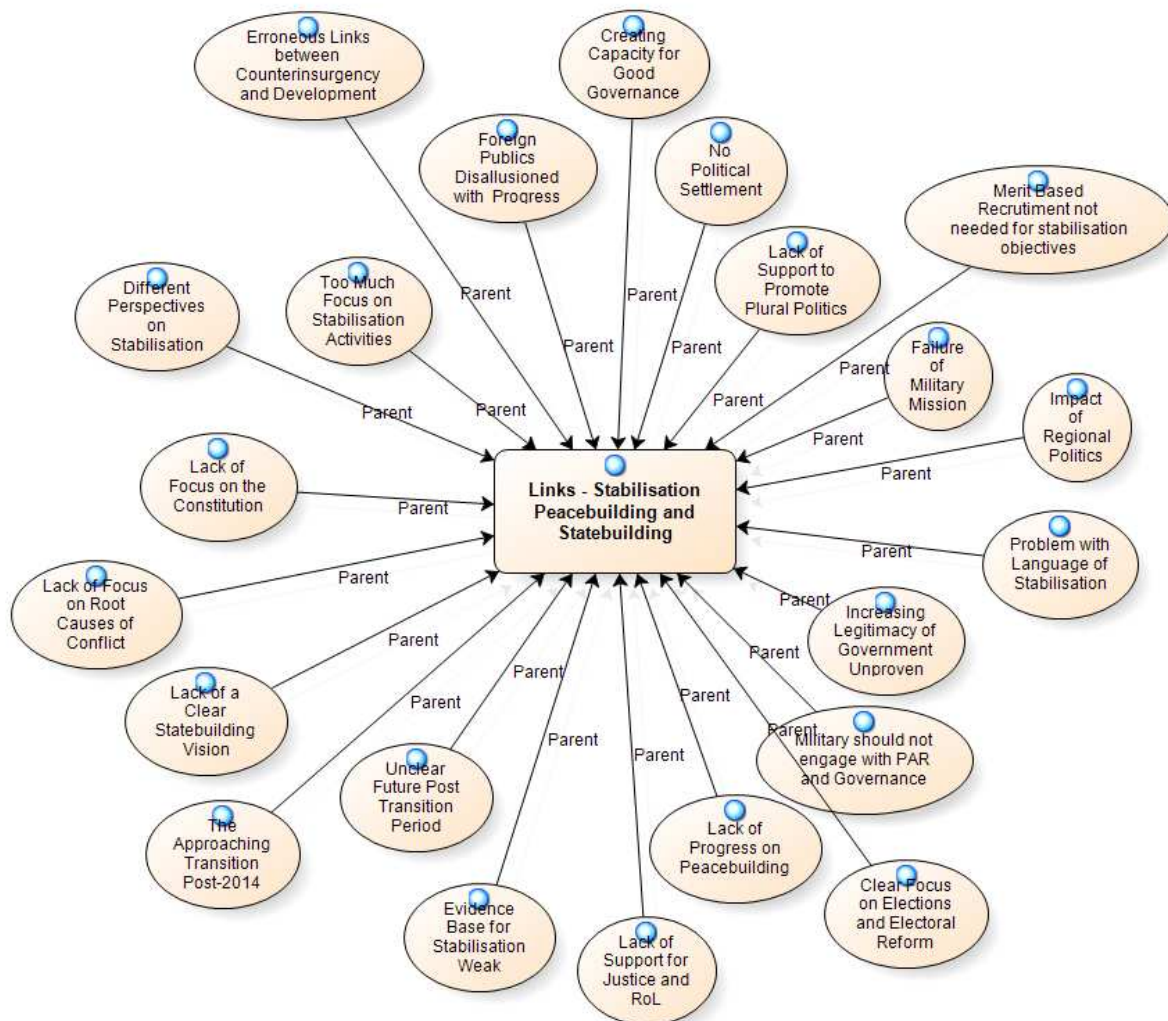


Figure 6.5 Links – Stabilisation, Peacebuilding, Statebuilding

Despite the above comment, the lack of articulation of what sort of an Afghan state is being built was one of the strongest recurring themes and was linked to further multiple causes of failure:

The risk I see here is that an emphasis on a central state that is not articulated with regional and local levels of government may suffer disconnects that bias perspectives in manners that are not helpful and provide rich sources of perverse incentives.

Another dominant theme in the interviews is the mention of security concerns in the minds of donors and the Government:

Because security was at the top of the Government's agenda there wasn't much political support from the leadership or public administration reform in Afghanistan.

On the issue of lack of strategy and conflicting objectives:

Donors have clear political objectives that can push/pull in different directions.

And:

I think that even among the donors there's not a common understanding of what should be the priorities because they have their own foreign policies and in some respects they may conflict with each other so it's very hard for them to identify what is a common priority from their side.

And from a deputy minister:

And secondly I think there was lack of coherence among international forces among international organisation among forty-plus countries here. They all had different mandates; they all had different objectives, possibly different political agendas, so there was no unified approach.

And the lack of a government strategy:

We don't have a strategy, Afghanistan doesn't have a strategy. I'm not talking about short-term strategies like ANDS which is not being implemented anyway, it's being shelved or NPPs, which is very unrealistic or superficial. I'm talking about the future of the country as a whole and the Government particularly.

The constant pressure on foreign governments from a multitude of places caused some important donors to let their focus lapse and water down any emergent strategy. Sir William Patey, interviewed by *The Telegraph* 11 March 2011 noted of the early period in Afghanistan (2002–5):

The opportunity to train and equip the Afghan National Security Forces to fill the power vacuum was missed, allowing the Taliban to return. We were too focused on Iraq and we took our eye off the ball. We thought we had won [in Afghanistan] and the Taliban had run away and we just sort of left it to the Afghans to get on with it and we very quickly switched our focus to Iraq. You ask me what the biggest risk to the success of our strategy is? Well, it's us. It is the West being diverted somewhere else or the International Community not being prepared to ante up the money.

Much of the initial support to PAR was initially funded and provided by both the US and the UK, and both were fatally distracted by the Iraq intervention. The following is

evidence from Sir William Patey to the House of Commons and emphasises this point well:

They were asking why we had not made more progress and why, after almost ten years, the country still seemed difficult, complex and, in the Daily Telegraph's eyes, was not making the progress that might have been expected after nine or ten years of engagement. So it was in that context that I suggested, and I have said this many times before, not just to the Daily Telegraph, that after the invasion and the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, my sense, with hindsight I have to say, was that the focus had switched very quickly to Iraq. Indeed, I was the ambassador in Iraq in 2005 and 2006, during what I would regard as the period when we had taken our eye off the ball in Afghanistan. It was clear to me that the focus of the Government and the public was on Iraq. Having arrived in Afghanistan in 2010, it struck me that there was a period where some of the things that we were doing in 2009 and 2010 were things that might have been done earlier. We did not begin building up the security forces of Afghanistan early enough in my view. Perhaps we had not achieved as much as we should have done. The focus was on Iraq during the period of 2003–7 (Sir William Patey, 2012).

Numerous comments in chapters 4 and 5 verify the above:

Too much 'doing' especially by an enthusiastic military rather than teaching and supporting and mentoring.

As a key government agency working in the areas where stabilisation activities take place, one official noted:

Improving stability in the critical districts, from an IDLG perspective, is about having people perceiving their Government being capable and strong managing delivery of service that is on-budget, led by the Government and are managed through government common functions such as systemic local planning, improved capacity of local government institutions, use of government systems and processes. However, we do not control all this, at times we are completely sidelined.

Involvement of the military is a particularly perplexing issue for most interviewees. The military presence has increased pressure on the civilian effort to deliver 'results'.

However, the civilian side has not communicated what development is, and how it is done. Instead the military has attempted to fill the perceived void:

Interventions are undertaken without the knowledge of the Government, often not translated into Dari and then presented as GIRoA policy; that's not real partnership.

NATO/ISAF has crossed boundaries, a situation that does not exist elsewhere to such an extent. Respondents felt much needed to be done to help the military to understand where they can add value and what they should stay out of: quick fixes can be damaging. That there was a lack of understanding in the military is attested to by General Stanley McChrystal himself; speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations on 6 October 2011 with regard to Afghanistan, he noted:

We didn't know enough and we still don't know enough ... most of us – me included – had a very superficial understanding of the situation and history, and we had a frighteningly simplistic view of recent history, the last 50 years (McChrystal, 2011).

Another very senior Afghan official mused over stabilisation interventions:

I think a lot of these major donors and international organisations, they looked for quick results; they looked for quick deliverables in order to convince their wider public opinion back in their respective countries. Yes there were political reasons too because their soldiers were dying, they wanted to show something back on the screen of their TV to show their citizens you know we are there to support, we are there to help, but things were managed and projects were executed in a very rash manner which shouldn't have been done in the first place.

This rings very true with findings of multiple evaluations and specifically the findings of SIGAR noted in Chapter 5. With regard to the continued use of parallel practices, parallel mechanisms and structures, especially the PRTs:

The GIRoA and IC have agreed both on London, Kabul and Bonn conferences to cease the existing of the parallel structures supporting service delivery such as PRTs. PRTs will eventually cease to exist gradually along with the Transition Roadmap. But, in the case of SIKa programme, we do see that now very expensive international companies like AECOM are given contract to support community-based local development, off-budget, and overshadowing the practices and capacity of GIRoA relevant entities by justifying the programme modality through being implemented under the stability objectives.

The language of FCASs and post-conflict support appears to cause problems, particularly for Afghan partners. In multi-agency work settings language is important and can either bring potential partners together or drive them apart. The US Government frequently refers to Afghanistan as an irregular warfare and nationbuilding exercise, which particularly rankles with some Afghans. This was noted frequently in the interviews and

is noted also in the evaluations in Chapter 5. The specific, almost perpetual focus on corruption also stigmatises all Afghans. Afghan interviewees consistently suggested that pursuing the language of conflict, fragility and insurgency stigmatises Afghanistan and contributes to a forever mired in conflict mindset¹⁰⁵. One Afghan noted:

There is divisive language ... incentives which could be easily exploited by these spoilers.

And the results can be seen in the withdrawal of Afghanistan from international ‘surveys’:

As a Government we refused to partake in the Fragile States Survey in 2009 as this came at a delicate time here.

The links between development, reforms and the terrifying impacts of the ongoing conflict are only mentioned in passionate terms by Afghan interviewees:

One thing that I have come to agree with, and it's just this year that I think I want foreigners out now; it's just too much, too long and it's just not working. Look at the Koran-burning things, look at the things they've done in the country; I'm not talking about the last couple of days, I'm talking about the ones that happened in the country. The civilian casualties have happened, have children in one day, for God's sake, haven't we learnt enough. The man that walks into somebody's house and kills 16 people, what are we doing? What are we teaching these soldiers and officers in the West? Are we not doing enough cultural training? Do they not realise what our values are and in a Muslim country like this?.

The problem with talking up the gains in areas subject to stabilisation was noted:

‘Good news’ is a reporting requirement at the expense of the truth and can jeopardise the companies/technical advisers involved as well as donors etc. (related to turf wars at home). The International Community needs to show progress at home; we have backed ourselves into a corner to deliver quickly and visibly when the weak administration makes this impossible. We must communicate progress back at home realistically, the focus has been on security in order to address home concerns; we have watered down expectations – such as good governance to good enough governance.

¹⁰⁵ UK military doctrine divides political actors in stabilisation contexts into five categories: ‘adversaries, belligerents, neutrals, friendlies and spoilers’. This defines only one set of good guys on your side. It implies all the others are trying to cause problems (!!).

6.8 Conclusions

Whilst there were some outlying comments, the interviews, were remarkably consistent in their interpretations of events over the last ten years. Nearly all interviewees had had a continual or continuous engagement in Afghanistan and thus had the benefit of hindsight. The honesty of the Afghan interviewees was breathtaking at times, challenging the legitimacy and authority of the incumbent authorities even when they were a part of it in senior positions.

The interviewees believed there was little political support for CSAR reforms after 2005. Change management initiatives in some ministries were and are donor-driven, with the core civil service marginalised and not engaged. Figure 6.6 lists these multiple failures.

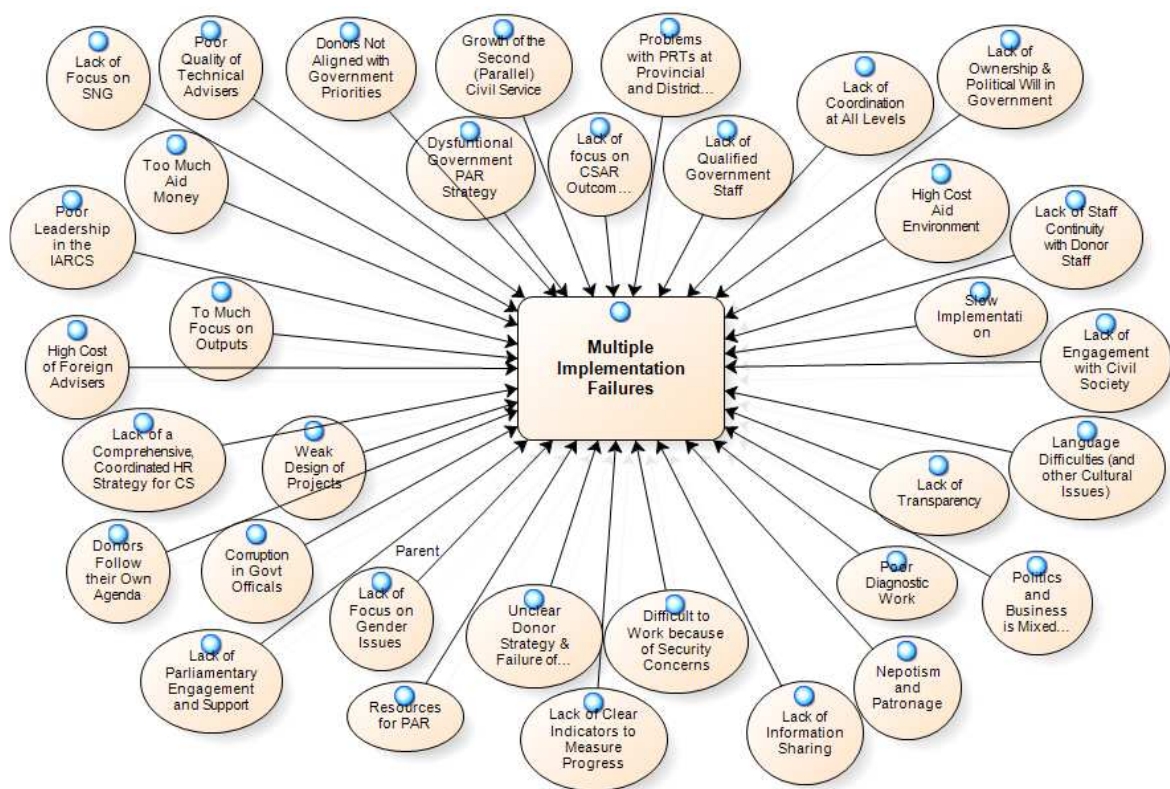


Figure 6.6 Multiple Reasons for Failure

The coincidence of the lack of focus on the issue of CSAR from donors, the deteriorating security problems and growing corruption eats away at the reforms that are made leading

to the few reformers being discouraged. This has led to multiple barriers to implementation at all levels. The picture is one of complexity with many variables. The FGDs, interviews and other data suggest a veritable cocktail of failure with multiple reasons for slow progress on CSAR and related areas. CSAR, as can be seen from Chapter 2 (literature review), and Chapters 4 and 5, is a complex and unusually difficult part of government business, even in the West and benign development environments. Chapter 4 concludes that CSAR in Afghanistan has failed. The FGDs and interviews add some flavour to the rather more anodyne evaluation work.

Figure 6.7 is a simple word frequency count of all sources, and, whilst simple, suggests some interesting ideas. The primacy and use of the word ‘government’ over the word ‘governance’, the words ‘think’, ‘people’, ‘time’, ‘years’, ‘service’, ‘political’, ‘money’, all contribute to a sense of the longevity of reforms needed to get government back up and running

actually administration administrative afghan

afghanistan afghans also back based better bit budget building capacity

civil clear come commission community corruption country course

development different difficult done donors enough even example feel first get

going good got governance government international issue

just know lack last leadership level like local lot make management many mean

ministries ministry money much need now one people

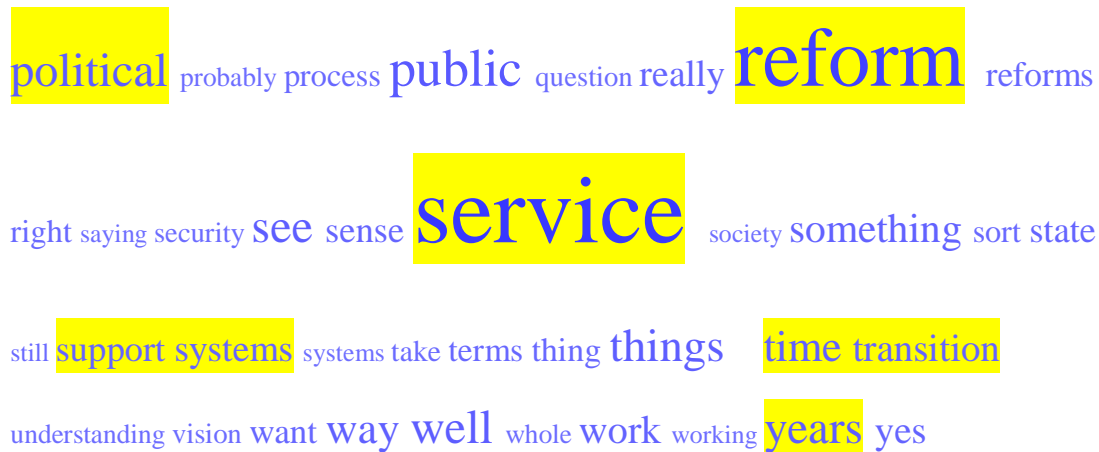


Figure 6.7 Word Frequency – All Sources

It is clear from the interviews and FGDs that it is nonsense to expect a government to implement CSARs at the same time as contributing to a complex counterinsurgency campaign with multiple stabilisation projects. The assumption that government employees, many of whom are not actually civil servants at all, can implement a multitude of complex community projects and major infrastructure projects whilst reinventing itself as a public service and implementing a completely new legal frameworks across all levels of government, whilst only having control of around 20% of the resources, is stretching credulity to the limit. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 conclude that there are serious limits to CSAR in Afghanistan as a result of a seemingly unique set of circumstances.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

“If all else fails, immortality can always be assured by spectacular error”.

JK Galbraith

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions to this research.

After years of conflict, destruction and displacement there is no end in sight to the misery of the people of Afghanistan. War continues in parts of the country. The political situation remains volatile with periods and areas of relative tranquility and sudden and shifting outbursts of fighting.

These lines are quoted from the ‘Strategic Framework for Afghanistan’ published in 1998. The situation in 2013, 15 years later, looks remarkably similar despite a massive investment by the IC since 2001. The Mujahadeen and then the Taliban brought chaos onto Afghanistan over an extended period. The arrival of the IC in 2001 did not end the violence, indeed it surged in the period post 2006/7. At the time of concluding this thesis, the size of the Afghan National Police was estimated at 157,000 personnel and is basically functioning as an additional military force (ASI, 2014). Violence across Afghanistan is rising again and the ICG (2014,p.i) report the overall trend is one of escalating violence and insurgent attacks.

For all the time that foreign troops have stood on Afghan soil, there has been a cycle of violence. General McChrystal quoted in Foreign Affairs talking about the fight against Al Qaeda post 9/11, sums up the stance of the US military.

People hear most about the targeting cycle, which we called F3EA -- "find, fix, finish, exploit, and analyze." You understand who or what is a target, you locate it, you capture or kill it, you take what intelligence you can from people or equipment or documents, you analyze that, and then you go back and do the cycle again, smarter.(McChrystal, 2013)

Despite the violence, much effort has been expended into PAR and the intentions and common content of CSAR reforms implemented in Afghanistan by the IC in Afghanistan

suggest that the IC believe that reforms are appropriate and implementable. However, the findings presented here suggest this optimism is unjustified. This leads to the question posed in Chapter 1 – have the reforms brought better government to Afghanistan? Do Afghans feel better governed? Did PAR and specifically CSAR contribute to making Afghanistan a more stable place? And subsequently which approach or approaches to civil service and administrative reforms are most likely to fail in a Fragile and Conflict Affected Situation? The debate continues on whether the state of Afghanistan is ‘viable’ or not. The evidence suggests that the state continues to need support in all areas of administration, development, security and justice, perhaps more so now than at any time in the last ten years; citizens’ expectations have also risen. The IC is no closer to defining what ‘viable’ is.

Whilst the vast majority of Afghan people have no real interest in CSAR, they do care about stability, security and basic services. Improving the civil service and its organisation and management is key to managing the Government’s work in these areas. However, whilst the administration is generally regarded as more competent, and there have been good improvements in PFM, CSAR and what might be termed ‘general administration’ has seen little progress and the IC’s interest in pursuing it has tailed off since 2005. CSAR is a difficult area of reform to tackle anywhere. This can be seen initially from the findings of the literature review, the lack of success in more benign environments, and through the experiences of pursuing CSAR in Afghanistan as outlined in the documentation review contained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 also demonstrated the tenuous but multifarious links between CSAR and stabilisation initiatives and the interviews in chapter 6 finally and conclusively showed the full range of problems with implementing CSAR in Afghanistan, exposing multiple failings at all levels of the system.

The section on stabilisation and security interventions in Chapter 6 demonstrated that the Government and the International Community, through their military and development interventions have failed to provide what Afghans need most – human security. The principal problems with building the public administration have been:

- Allowing the development of a parallel externally funded labour force to develop and ‘masquerade’ as the civil service.
- Failing to limit the corruption and the diversion of resources from the massive injection of funds.
- Failure to understand the links between local government, security and service delivery.
- Failure in the overall security, diplomatic, peacebuilding and stabilisation objectives.

There is no agreement in the literature, and nothing evident from the Afghan case study on what constitutes an ‘ideal’ type of government or a ‘viable’ government, or what is ‘good enough’ to claim success in the immediate post-conflict period. In Afghanistan there is no mutual agreement or understanding of the time required to reach any such imaginary ‘end point’ other than general commitments that Afghanistan will support itself by 2015. However, these predictions are, in any event, based upon false or non-existent data. All the interviewees acknowledged that self-reliance even by 2025 is a faint possibility.

The research also demonstrates that the assessment of the particular attractiveness of an approach is more likely to be related to the values and beliefs of the organisation pursuing that approach and less to hypotheses about causes and effects. This is particularly the case where little evidence is available to approve or disprove a particular approach. In particular, NPM, with its focus on results, indicators, evidence and links into ‘market economy’ type practices and ‘efficiency’, demonstrates little in the way of evidence to back up its claimed potential in the Afghan context, although as noted in the literature review there is little evidence anywhere, so this is unsurprising. It is very unlikely to offer helpful options in a state like Afghanistan.

The IC is faced with trying to solve problems for which there is little agreed definition of what constitutes ‘success’, and how to measure it in terms of outcomes, nor even an agreed definition of the problems, priorities and necessary sequencing to tackle them: the

classic definition of a ‘wicked’ problem. The military in particular are faced with multiple dilemmas. It is recalled that ISAF’s mission is only to ‘facilitate’¹⁰⁶ improvements in governance, but what does ‘facilitate’ mean in an Afghan context? The Afghanistan project is a ‘wicked problem’ that will take decades of continuous support to help reach greater stability and an improved public sector. Lastly, the conclusions examine a potential way forward for making progress on public service reform in FCASs.

7.2 The Lack of Available Evidence

It is clear that the lack of academic research into CSAR and PAR in general in Afghanistan hampers the ability to draw clear conclusions, despite the wealth of grey literature and the vibrant international policy discourse. Furthermore, in the case of Afghanistan, even when the research is available, there is little evidence of it being used to influence policy. Evidence that demonstrates effects to the contrary of what is sought has been set aside.

One obvious explanation for the lack of evidence is the limitations on research in ongoing conflict situations. It is rare to come across researchers and academics in Afghanistan, especially where the conflict is kinetic. Even published research often clarifies at the outset that the researcher has not been able to make field visits. Research that is undertaken is generally carried out in connection with individual projects for a specific purpose. The author is reminded of observations made by Ferguson (1994), commenting on the use of evidence with regard to development:

An academic analysis is of no use to a ‘development’ agency unless it provides a place for the agency to plug itself in, unless it provides a charter for the sort of intervention that the agency is set up to do.

This seems to fit perfectly the situation in Afghanistan where the IC, hidebound by its own self-interest, imposes this severe limitation on many of its development projects. There are problems with the timeliness and availability of evidence; interviewees also talk about the lack of sharing of information, incomplete analysis, research projects

¹⁰⁶ Definition of ‘facilitate’ is make easy or easier – OED.

cancelled or abridged. There is little doubt from the evidence that a deeper understanding of the cultural context can support the development of a more culturally empathetic approach to civil service reform policy and implementation in Afghanistan. A senior civil society figure noted: *“It is a mistake to think that Kabul represents Afghanistan, the foreigners keep making that same basic mistake”*. The IC has mistakenly assumed there is a uniform administrative landscape across Afghanistan.

Whilst there is frequent mention by international organisations like the WB concerning the need for the host country to take the lead on developing the research agenda, and to own and manage that agenda, there is very little progress in the Afghanistan context. It is the WB as the administrator of the ARTF that will manage the \$5 million research fund allocated in 2013 from the ARTF pot, despite the evidence that suggests the Government of Afghanistan will not be keen on owning policy without owning the research agenda that suggested what the policy ought to be.

7.3 Problems with Working in FCASs

The multilateral and bilateral evaluations, verified by the interviews, confirm that delivering aid in Afghanistan is particularly expensive with higher administration costs, additional security and life support costs in the field, implementation delays and sometimes complex subcontracting arrangements that are difficult to manage. Many parts of Afghanistan are inaccessible due to security concerns. Areas where most work is required are often those most insecure and most inaccessible. It is perceived in these places to be dangerous to work with or on behalf of government. This suite of problems constitutes a major part of the ‘multiple causes of failure’ described in Chapter 6.

Additionally, the evaluations all raised serious concerns about the future sustainability of programmes and projects. Multilateral and bilateral assessments also point to multiple failings by donors, their lack of experience in dealing with states and situations like Afghanistan, and the inability of international staff to do their jobs properly due to the serious problems with security and restrictions on their movement.

Initial stabilisation efforts and approaches were developed based upon the flimsiest of evidence, such as positing direct causal relationships between the quality of institutions and the legitimacy of government. The pursuit of ‘quick win projects’, the ‘low-hanging fruit’ of development, is based on little evidence as to their efficacy. The evidence suggests there is too simplistic an understanding of statebuilding in a conflict environment, thus the IC tend to use standard templates as a way of avoiding delving into the complexities. Development professionals have long found it difficult to recognise and deal with non-state forms of local governance, security, justice and dispute resolution, yet paradoxically frequently bypass the state. Much in the way of the design and delivery of services in Afghanistan does just that, it bypasses state apparatus. Yet it is known from past experience with the massive integrated rural development projects carried out in the 1970s and 1980s that, for long-term development gains: the state has to provide clear leadership and commitment; it must ensure strong coherence between development projects and macroeconomic policy; supply-driven approaches do not work; and project management is extremely difficult (World Bank, 1988).

Stabilisation literature has been consumed by best practice, idealised ‘end states’, trying to fuse military and civilian lingo, learning to speak each other’s language but never fully understanding what the meanings of ‘good government’ and ‘good governance’ are, and never succeeding in measuring it, anyway. That stabilisation may not be good value for money as currently implemented is acknowledged by Jackson and Heyson, (2013) referring to evidence from the UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact Evaluation of the Conflict Pool Funds, note:

We know that aid spending on stabilisation efforts is proven to be one of the least effective ways of spending aid. If we are looking for value for money and impact then we should focus on programming that has a proven track record of effectiveness.

Significant problems have arisen in terms of civil-military training for new tasks demanded in a stabilisation environment. Little clarity has been achieved over the roles, responsibilities, objectives, activities, trade-offs and priorities which characterise stabilisation efforts, and related peacebuilding and statebuilding operations. In the case of

Afghanistan significant foreign forces are fighting an active insurgency, whilst at the same time other ‘development-oriented’ agencies are working to a different conception of the problem. One of the peculiarities of Afghanistan is that multiple actors have been engaged in attempting CSAR of one sort or another, following reform paths that reflect their own immediate interests.

The problems with inter-agency operability extend beyond simply the military–civilian nexus. Significant problems of coordination and understanding exist for NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, IFIs, and the UN, each characterised by very different organisational cultures, capacities and motivations. It may seem obvious that the US military does not necessarily think or act in the same way as the WB or DFID, but the impacts can be substantial when the IC works at cross purposes. Project interventions continue to be poorly developed and often imposed by the IC, making Afghans further wary of external interventions, and contributing to the general lack of trust in the IC and their advisers.

Thus there are significant issues unresolved in terms of *aid effectiveness* in a conflict environment. Twelve years after the reconstruction effort started in Afghanistan, no one is required to provide information on what donor funds are used for. The GIRoA AMD (2013) AMP provides a clear summary of all the ongoing problems with aid management in Afghanistan. The perceived lack of ownership of the aid agenda is amply demonstrated in both the evaluations and the interviews. There is no accurate data available on what monies were spent on CSAR. Yet at the same time the focus on Value for Money (VfM), transparency and accountability demanded by donors diverts attention away from ensuring effectiveness; this is validated by the results of the interviews and the evaluations. The heads of office for the IC in-country try to reduce their exposure to risk and risky projects, fearful of the repercussions when the auditors come in, as per the multiple failings uncovered by SIGAR. Donors need to meet the requirements of demanding domestic agendas that seek to eliminate waste and corrupt practices, and that seek to demand results from their contractors. Experimentation in such an environment is not encouraged.

There are three colliding worlds in the aid industry: humanitarian aid, longer-term development strategies, and stabilisation/COIN. In Afghanistan they collide spectacularly, with unfortunate consequences. The explosion in violence in the period 2007-8 finally confirmed the evident tensions between waging a vicious war, attempting to build peace and a legitimate government, pointing evermore to the need for a political solution to the conflict. In FCASs the unintended consequences of misguided aid approaches, programmes and poor aid practices are amplified. A number of authors (Maren, 1997; Easterly et al., 2003; Sachs, 2005; Polman, 2010) have noted that ‘development aid’, despite generally being considered a force for good, can negatively impact on organisations and skew accountability in developing countries and especially FCASs (Wood, 2008). Allegations against the current aid paradigm include, *inter alia*, that it is ineffective and wasteful, can destroy the contract between the people and the state, creates parallel state structures that replace the state, and ultimately stifles the emergence of capable and accountable states (Barder, 2009, p.4).

Whilst not the objective of this research, there is emerging empirical evidence that, whilst ‘good governance’ is positively linked to improved development outcomes, a small but growing empirical literature, and a vibrant accompanying debate, suggests that the provision of aid (and lots of it) might actually be linked to worsening governance and a weakening of institutional capacity (see Kaufmann, 2005; Heckelman and Knack, 2005; Ear 2006).

7.4 The Lack of Success with CSAR, the Links to Other PAR and the Limits to Institutionalism

PSR in developed countries is slow and only partially successful, yet the IC has applied similar models of public sector development and reform to Afghanistan, initially borrowing heavily from ‘conflict experience’ gained in Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor Leste, and latterly Iraq, where many development workers and PSM consultants had gained some initial experience. The IC advised by the multilateral organisations, principally the UN, the WB and ADB with their initial technical assessments, dominated the early

reform agenda. There was little autonomy in the Government to manage reform and consequently there was strong external pressure on the initial direction for CSAR approaches and objectives. Afghans, who had next to no experience of working with such organisations, contributed little to the early direction of reforms. Early allocations of resources and the presence of the IC in terms of embassy and development staff was also very low.

Early approaches, therefore, were speedy and predictable reform initiatives designed to get things moving; they followed a standard ‘normative’ civil service reform agenda despite the lack of evidence that such an agenda could deliver. The evidence also suggests that the IC recognised its lack of understanding of the context for reform early on, but the knowledge base has not expanded greatly since.

The research also documents the declining interest in CSAR with a switch of focus to the more nebulous concept of ‘good governance’, linked into notions of democracy and political modernisation. The lack of focus by DFID Afghanistan on CSAR in latter years is all the more puzzling as recommendations contained in its own meta-evaluation of engagement in fragile states stated:

DFID should be cautious of using TA in isolation from other instruments or providing TA in the absence of progress on necessary reforms in areas such as the host government’s civil service (Chapman and Vaillant 2010, p.xvi).

After 12 years the focus in Afghanistan with regard to CSAR remains on the following five functional objectives:

1. Depoliticised human resource management practices;
2. Attracting and retaining the required human capital;
3. Meritocratic appointments;
4. Performance management of human resources; and
5. Wage bill sustainability.

Little has moved on. Afghanistan is still focused on the basics of civil service management. The changes wrought by the IC over the last decade have hardly altered the

‘core’ of the civil service with its strong centralist tendencies and old ways of doing things. Patronage appointments are and will remain the norm, partly because there is often a legitimate need to secure the political support of certain political parties, ministers and government employees that often outweighs efficiency objectives or evidence of capability. Public administration at many levels in Afghanistan is characterised by rampant corruption, nepotism, and rent seeking. For senior positions in the civil service it is a potential gateway to substantial income streams. Successive evaluations have noted the ongoing problems with pursuing merit-based appointments, accountability and integrity measures and introducing Western concepts of civil service ‘ethics’. The approach adopted has undermined any prospect of developing a depoliticised civil service. The second civil service personnel are not civil servants, and could not be held to account by an independent commission – even if one existed. Neither the Appointments Board nor the Appeals Board in the IARCSC is independent.

Many interviewees inevitably raised the question of whether it is feasible or even well advised to attempt to establish a merit-based civil service in a situation characterised by ongoing conflict and polarised politics, where corruption issues fatally distract the attention of development partners, and where donors focus only on minimising their own risk and frequently bring about unintended outcomes from their own aid programmes. Esman (1999) has argued that in ethnically divided societies, depoliticisation, political neutrality and merit are not fundamental values in the public service; this is also true for Afghanistan. An approach solely based upon establishing a meritocracy will not necessarily lead to a competent and effective public service.

In Afghanistan, merit-based recruitment and promotion favours the connected groups, and is rooted in inequitable ethnic representation, and the need to reach local compromises and settlements. The political economy and the pressures brought about by the continued conflict and political polarisation maintain significant pressure upon public officials. Investment in modern institutions such as the civil service does not yet match the opportunities and protection afforded by ethnic and tribal ties.

The increasing marginalisation of the IARCSC is evidenced by both the results of the interviews and documentation. This research has documented the extraordinary situation the IC finds itself in with regard to development of the so-called ‘parallel’ or ‘second’ civil service. What is perceived as ‘overfunding’ has overwhelmed the absorptive and administrative capacity of the Afghan institutions, creating ever more pressure on donors, their implementing partners, and Afghan institutions to employ more qualified Afghans to keep up with the demanding workloads. The local nationals naturally take advantage of the situation as demand outstrips the supply of qualified personnel, leading to spiralling unsustainable salaries paid to local advisers. This rational response to take the salaries on offer, and indeed aim for higher and higher remuneration, is exacerbated by messages from the IC that the cash ‘bonanza’ will soon be over, i.e. post-2014. At least five official salary supplement schemes are running currently, along with many ‘bilateral’ and other informal arrangements. This situation is observed in other conflict-affected situations but not to the same degree as Afghanistan. The results are the creation of a self-serving technocratic elite in the Afghan Government largely disconnected from the people.

Parallel structures have been created at every level; it is not just the phenomenon of creating parallel donor-run structures within ministries but also inner structures, run and managed by Afghans. The operations of these mini-empires are not well understood by the IC. Inevitably, few experienced and qualified professionals in government service are prepared to work at a fiscally sustainable wage, i.e. under the existing revised pay and grading terms.

The implications of supporting this parallel ‘second’ civil service and not the core civil service are potentially dire. When the drop in donor funding occurs, as has been frequently suggested by the IC post-transition, many of those in the second civil service will lose their funding and will simply leave their posts¹⁰⁷. The core civil servants will be left to deliver, but their capacity has not been built. Continued maintenance of huge pay differentials undermine government pay structures and career development. The pressure

¹⁰⁷ Informal polling of these staff suggests that more than 50% will leave.

and focus on getting things done detracts attention from dealing with the institutional-level problems such as appropriate establishment limits, getting the right staff in the right jobs, evaluating job complexity, job grading, and performance issues. The lack of a robust government policy on the use of NTA holds back the development of the civil service.

CSAR has been marginalised at the expense of support to PFM. For the latter it is much easier to demonstrate progress and it complements the focus of the IC on the impacts of corruption and poor host country budget execution. The consistent and increasing investment in PFM is also partially based on the assumption that a sensible budget and sound financial processes, along with basic security, can most help a state to move out of fragility. This thesis argues that this unfortunately will not apply if the PFM improvements are managed by international advisers and a ‘parallel’ civil service, and when very little goes through the national budget anyway, which is the case for Afghanistan. The gloss placed upon PFM in Afghanistan is perhaps not as shiny as was once thought. It is much easier to write fiction (budgets and strategies) than to get them implemented¹⁰⁸. Modern PFM laws and capacity development interventions are thought to speed up budget execution but there are places much more stable than Afghanistan where budget execution rates remain low.

The Bank has taken upon itself the mantle of being a primary source of policy advice to the Government for the last 12 years and seems committed to continue in this vein. The World Bank’s latest Interim Strategy Note for Afghanistan (2012, p.iii) unashamedly notes:

In an environment where policy advice and assistance is essential, our analytic work provides support for Government and donor decision making. It is expected that the Bank will continue to play a leading role in terms of policy advice to Government through targeted, often crosssectoral, analytic work.

The Bank’s ISN for the period 2012–14, however, does not include any specific support to civil service reforms, only concentrating on PFM, except for the general support to

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/6852-public-financial-management-conflict-affected-fragile-states-cautious-optimism>.

CBR; the ISN refers only to establishment of the CBR programme, but is based in the MoF. The ARTF and IDA programmes are based on the ISN, and therefore mainstream support to the IARCS is unlikely to emerge.

The evaluations and interviews all affirm the lack of coherence in the PAR agenda – in particular, the disparities between the emphasis on ‘upstream’ work, essentially provide support to PFM at the expense of policy development and management, CSAR and other centre of government improvements. The other strong emphasis is on the ‘downstream’ activities, particularly service delivery issues. There is little in the way of guidance to prepare and implement a more coherent PAR strategy. Technical support to the Afghanistan equivalent of a ‘Cabinet Office’, the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA), is negligible. In 2013 only one adviser was placed in the centre of government. The so called ‘civilian surge’ bypassed centre of government support.

The potential use of aid conditionality to achieve reforms in CSAR is also unutilised, albeit noting the recognised criticisms of conditionality as a donor ‘lever or tactic’. Current conditionality is geared mainly to pushing PFM issues and fiscal sustainability; using the IMF Article 4 benchmarks, ARTF Structural Benchmarks, and the PFM Roadmap. Further similar conditionality is set out in the Economic Crimes Roadmap and the Kabul and London Conference Communiqués, with the apogee of donor demands set out in the TMAF presented to the Tokyo Conference in July 2012. It is almost inconceivable that the GIRoA would not have a PFM Roadmap, just like other countries, but the lack of a CSAR strategy does not seem to raise an eyebrow. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) Joint Report on progress on the TMAF presented in July 2013 notes that the TMAF:

As a whole aims to create an enabling environment for sustainable democracy, good governance, and economic growth. Government commitments under TMAF have been grouped under the themes of Representational Democracy and Equitable Elections; Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights; Integrity of Public Finance and Commercial Banking; Government Revenues, Budget Execution and Sub-National Governance; and Inclusive and Sustained Growth and Development (and) The international community’s commitments focus on Aid Effectiveness (p.4).

The TMAF narrows the focus further and away from CSAR. The CBR project demonstrates this emphasis further with its focus on strengthening budget execution and service delivery at the expense of addressing other aspects of PAR. The CBR Project Document¹⁰⁹ admits that PFM focus has been overwhelmingly at the centre to the Treasury and Budget Departments in the MoF, the Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Services (ARDS) for public sector procurement management, and the Control and Audit office (CAO) at the expense of reform in other ministries and sub-national governance. The majority of donor support has therefore become increasingly narrowly focused on building the technical capacity of the state in the area of PFM, service delivery and anti-corruption activities.

Most ministries have simply adopted a ‘veneer’ of reform that satisfies the International Community’s demands for legitimacy in government whilst making very few underlying changes to the public service. Very few government agencies currently demonstrate existence of sanctions for poor performance or corruption. The relationship between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary remains uncertain, frequently confrontational and often dysfunctional; political competition and the quest for spoils override cooperation or concerns with delivery.

There is more than a suggestion that Afghanistan suffers in part from the situation described in Yemen by Phillips (2011), a multilayered governance system in which the elite in power operate behind closed doors in an opaque manner while relatively powerless officials do what they can to manage the Government’s formal administration. The only difference is that the individuals ‘managing’ in the Afghan Ministries are nearly all ‘second civil service’ officials.

7.5 Problems with Good Governance: Ambiguity and Misunderstandings

¹⁰⁹ Add ref – pg9 of document

If one of the key objectives for FCASs is the need to focus on good governance, as opposed to an efficient and effective public administration in support of statebuilding objectives, then the IC is asking GIRoA to exercise influence over many things it does not control, at a time when it has little control even over its own business, and particularly the organisation and management of its own employees. It also has little control over the funds allocated to support ‘good governance’. In the MoF Budget Statement for the period 1391–93, it is noted that the:

Good Governance Sector gets around 5.4% of the State Budget, which accounts for around 1.5 % of GDP. The sector had moderate implementation records of the development budget over the past few years, with execution rate of 30.5% in 1389” (MoF DG Budget, 2012, p.23).

Expenditure by the Government on governance issues is extremely modest and what is allocated has not been fully spent anyway.

The close link being claimed by some authors between good governance and statebuilding means that the statebuilding tasks by implication then have to extend to, *inter alia*, the promotion of human rights, promotion of democracy and civil society, the rule of law, social cohesion et al. All of these concepts may have strong roots in Western cultures but a very weak foundation in Afghanistan. In addition, the vast proliferation of governance ‘indicators’ are ‘Western’ constructs which have limited relevance to Afghanistan, but they are so widespread as to be ‘internationally accepted’ (Arndt and Oman, 2008).

The experience with such indicators in Afghanistan is poor. Good governance as a concept in Afghanistan remains vaguely articulated. Indicators for progress on good governance are notoriously difficult to collect, change very slowly and consequently have proved of little use in the Afghanistan stabilisation environment. CPIA looks generally at capacity and governance but is very subjective. Academics use the worldwide governance indicators but for the measure of the strength of public institutions it is again focused on PFM. Further, a general focus on governance requires a high degree of judgment to decide in what order governance issues should be tackled.

Grindle (2007) poses the question:

Given limited resources of money, time, knowledge, and human and organisational capacity, what are the best ways to move towards better governance in a particular country context?

Unfortunately, She merely poses the same question as previously asked, offering no new insights as to how the prioritisation will take place. The antidote to government excess, corruption and lack of transparency is often suggested to be strong civil society capable of holding government to account, but developing civil society takes time. As can be seen from the interviewee responses, civil society opinion in Afghanistan is weak, divided and plays little role in putting pressure on the Government to improve civil service administration. Similarly the parliament is portrayed by the interviewees as being weak, venal, self-interested and clearly corrupt in numerous instances. Parliament takes advantage of the weak administration, simply using it as another route to exercise patronage. The media coverage of problems with parliament is so heavy that local media cannot be accused of shirking their role in holding MPs to account, but they still appear to have little impact.

There are few research bodies and local think tanks to support the creation of demand for better governance. Entities such as ‘Afghan Analytica’, an independent, non-partisan online platform created and managed by Afghan practitioners, academics and advocates, have been set up only recently in 2012 to provide independent analysis and commentary on key Afghanistan-related topics. AREU was initially supported by donors and has produced much research evidence for the IC but correspondence from their management suggests that their financial position has always been precarious with unpredictable support.

7.6 CSAR in Afghanistan is a Wicked Problem

To paraphrase Wildavsky (1973), the IC has become a victim of its own excessive ambition. Its belief that it is possible to stabilise and renew states in a modern form in a reasonable time period has overwhelmed them. The problem has now become so large that the IC cannot begin to encompass its dimension. The research demonstrates that the

issue of CSAR in FCASs is one of extreme complexity that unsurprisingly defies progress.

The Afghanistan case study suggests incidence of the classic ‘wicked problem’ situation, where ignorance of institutional context, overambition, a misunderstanding of past legacies, poor interventions based upon short-term and personality-driven donor engagement, frequent disagreements and lack of cooperation amongst stakeholders, and decision-making that is often reduced to risk mitigation suggest that failure in such interventions is almost inevitable.

However, the IC in general treats Afghanistan like a ‘tame’ problem, bringing to bear technical ‘quick fix’ solutions with little thought to the unintended consequences. There is, especially from the US interventions, a belief that more money, more people, more project management and better coordination will overcome the impediments to change. But this is most likely compounds the problem. The approaches adopted by the IC in Afghanistan are themselves impediments to addressing the overarching wicked problems apparent in public administration generally and FCASs in particular. Many of the systems and controls enforced upon Afghanistan demand technical approaches (which cannot be challenged) that focus only on a narrow set of objectives or results. This ensures that the potentially good work of the host government, such as seeking inter-agency solutions that can address some of the wicked problems, does not happen. The promotion of the parallel ‘second’ civil service reinforces this tendency, encouraging an elite group of contracted employees to give priority to their paymasters and not to their respective departments; they are caught between loyalties.

At a more strategic level the approach pursued by the IC relies on the GIRoA having clear goals and a stable and supportive political environment, and retaining control over all the resources and capabilities necessary to deliver on the goals. As Alford and Head (2008) note, none of these apply in the presence of wicked problems and they certainly do not apply in the Afghanistan case study.

The multitude of actors and the long procurement chains, with contractors employing subcontractors who in turn contract local NGOs, mean that the gap between the policy intention and its implementation (of the intentions of the donors and the Government) is greater with a consequential increase in the likelihood of something going wrong. Hupe (2011), revisiting the work of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), notes that the more links that can be observed in the vertical line between intentions and results as embodied by a policy process, the smaller the chance will be of there being a 'congruent' implementation of the public policy concerned. He calls this 'the thesis of incongruent implementation'. The problem can also lead to the paradox that the greater the complexity of relationships, hierarchies and stakeholders, the more the managerial competence and professionalism of public servants in practice will count (p.76). Unfortunately, Afghans cannot supply the level of competence required to manage this complexity of relationships.

Head (2008), revisiting 'wicked problems', draws attention to new pressures and challenges for wicked problems in public policy such as uncertainty, discontinuity, competing goals and information overload, all of which resonate with the international engagement in Afghanistan as set out in the results of this research. A simple example in practice is that the conditions necessary to authorise financial transfers within donor organisations such as USAID, DFID and others cannot be met insofar as wicked problems do not admit the possibility of accurately predicting the effects of any given intervention, and this is certainly the finding in Afghanistan, as testified to by multiple evaluations and the interviews. The FCAS is by nature unstable and unpredictable. The conceptual and operational structures of donors (the rules of the game) therefore constrain their professional staff to patterns of recognition and intervention that are not appropriate for the wicked problems they are being asked to address. In the case of the military, for example, they fall back onto tried and trusted 'command and control' management.

It is not just the FCAS that lacks capacity; the external interveners also lack capacity to handle the complexity. The IC is required to work in ever more integrated cross-

organisational approaches to channel their efforts, yet deep institutional, organisational and operational forces impede effectiveness and closer working. A recent UN Advisory Group recognised their own staff limitations, suggesting that the UN will need to look beyond its own staff and draw on the full range of global capacities to mobilise the skills needed for a whole range of tasks¹¹⁰.

Donors, NGOs, multilateral institutions and international finance institutions (some acting also as donors), consultancy companies, and others work on policy strategies, the implementation of reform and operations on the ground in terms of service delivery. Each of the above has carved out 'spheres of influence'. In this instance there is a multitude of 'principals and agents' in a myriad of relationships. The different factors at play and multiple stakeholders in Afghanistan therefore undermine the possibility of any effective principal-agent model. This research confirms that the relations between the principal (the source of reform, sometimes assumed to be the government) and the agent (the individuals on which reform impacts, sometimes assumed to be the civil servants) are not reflective of the real motives and power relations within which reforms are instigated and managed. The IC plays a significant and distorting role. Whilst this is not a new finding, Harrison (2007, p.329) noted a similar situation in Mozambique, the multiplicity of principal-agent relationships clouds the fundamental imbalance of power further. In a typical principal-agent relationship, there is a contract that sets out how an agent will be rewarded for his work and how the principal will monitor that work for compliance. In Afghanistan, however, who is the principal? Is it the Government? Or is it perhaps the entity that pays the agent (the IC)? Or in some cases might it be the enforcer (the foreign military presence)? The ISAF and US military input, by blindly ignoring the bulk of the public administration:

Indicates a basic mis-reading of where agency must reside in the process and who the key actors should be. Their language indicates a presumption that external parties are the primary agents, and they can build up legitimate governance in a fragile state, even where there is ample evidence to the contrary¹¹¹.

¹¹⁰ Report of the Senior Advisory Group for the Review of International Civilian Capacities, UN 2011, <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=a/65/747>, accessed on 8 March 2011.

¹¹¹ Personal correspondence with Mr Andy Tamas of Tamas Consultants, a consultant who has carried out nearly 20 public sector projects in Afghanistan since 1998.

Furthermore, the growing complexity of the issues at stake has occurred at a time when donors' overall capability is weakening. The UK Government now contracts out almost every phase of the development project cycle: project design, management, implementation, and evaluation. In Afghanistan, UK government offices are undermanned and staff remain locked in their "fortified aid compounds" (Duffield, 2013). In addition, the UK also contracts on a multiple basis, so no one is responsible for understanding the overall picture or ensuring the bits fit together. Contractors therefore also find it hard to coordinate with other donors and projects given their accountability for specific 'deliverables'. Thus the UK Government, as a typical donor, is unprepared and/or ill-equipped for supervising both the work of contractors (agents) and government partners at precisely the time it has the most demands placed upon it. If they are the 'principal' exercising control over the 'agent' delivering the good or service, then in the circumstances of Afghanistan they simply cannot monitor or ensure contractual compliance as the act is too dangerous – hence the multiple findings in the evaluations and audits of a 'loss of control' and limited impact.

The UK ICAI has noted that DFID only had 108 Governance Advisers for its aid programme worldwide in 2012, although it had plans to expand that to 125 in the space of a year, acknowledging that it has struggled in the past to recruit suitably qualified personnel¹¹². The ICAI has also noted:

While we ... commend DFID staff for the job they have done under these [difficult] circumstances, we are concerned about the short postings, resultant loss of capacity and knowledge and weak institutional memory. We recommend that DFID create a cadre of experts with knowledge of Afghan language and culture, who will work on Afghanistan, in London or in country ... Longer tours and routine rotations to Afghanistan would also aid in this.

The problem is wicked from the Afghan point of view as well. It cannot easily penetrate the donors and the funding mechanisms. The overwhelming influence of the IFIs on the

¹¹²As noted in the Department for International Development's Annual Report and Accounts 2011–12 – International Development Committee, accessed at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/751/75106.htm>.

management of Trust Funds and the use of credit facilities also essentially disenfranchises the leadership of the Government over a significant part of the institutional terrain. The Afghan Government has minimal control over donors who essentially ‘call the shots’. This is unlikely to promote a climate of a stable and empowered leadership with high motivation to lead reform. One GIRoA Directorate General Head noted: “I cannot afford confrontation, they can sanction me; I cannot sanction them”.

There is little science in the world of PAR, and particularly in CSAR, which involves people and change. The IC needs to go beyond simply seeking greater understanding of context and ever greater collaboration and interoperability. The desire for ever more data and information of itself does not lead to a greater understanding of the complexity of issues facing the practitioner in an FCASs. A continued focus on the results-based approach and the obsession with metrics that cannot be accurately measured are counterproductive. Watters (2011) calls the latter “tyrannical performance measurement”: seeking (sometimes even making up) evidence that does not exist to satisfy domestic demand for results, and the over-reliance on log frames and rational planning, chasing value for money and reducing malfeasance, all will combine to reduce effectiveness.

Because stakeholders are from widely differing backgrounds, there are also deep divisions in the approach to prioritising and solving these critical issues. The evidence points towards donor engagement being mainly short term and personality-based. Support for CSR and related CB initiatives from donors has been focused on a few individuals and the organisation that they work in. They then place very high expectations upon them, treating them as potential reform champions. When expectations are inevitably not met, the response is not to look at systemic or institutional factors, but to look to engage with a new set of individuals and begin the cycle again. Thus donor support and interest has been focused on, and moved on past, the OAA, IARCSC, the Ministry of Economy and IDLG, and now lies with the Ministry of Finance, where the IC currently feels there is most opportunity for reform.

Whilst PAR is a technical subject area, it may also be that poor or incompetent decision-making is partly at fault, or it may be that there is simply no correct way, just something slightly better or worse depending on the perception and definition of the problem at hand. This research has highlighted the problem of dealing with uncertainties and the nature of being wrong in high-risk working environments. More recent work in this area is ongoing (Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews, 2013).

There is plentiful evidence of the human tendency to make things up when situations go awry, and the tendency to use memories selectively, and ignore the lessons of experience. Humans are continually tripped up by prejudices; a point eloquently made by Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman in his most recent book *Thinking Fast, Thinking Slow* (2011). Kahneman has shown through a multitude of papers on behavioural economics that man is far from rational. This may partly explain why, in the face of clear advice, such as seemingly competent project evaluations that recommend an agency does x or y, a funding agency may do exactly the opposite¹¹³. Management errors do occur; the world is littered with evidence of blunders, misjudgments and inexplicably poor decision-making: See, for example, Professor Peter Hall (1982) on great planning disasters, Ormerod (2005) on corporate incompetence, and Regan (2012) on military incompetence. As long ago as the 19th century, Charles MacKay (1995) had indicated that the mistakes, fads, delusions of mankind are not unique to the modern world. In an introduction to a reprint of the original book published in 1841 Norman Stone, professor of Modern History at Oxford University, notes: “Human folly changes only in detail and not in scale”.

The lack of a stable environment, the high levels of complexity and the demands that this places on the IC mean that strategy needs to be adaptive to the evolving circumstances, but changing strategy all the time is perceived, by some leaders at least, as demonstrating a dysfunctional planning and decision-making system. But what if the strategy was wrong at the outset and the leaders are always changing? What if the leaders never have

¹¹³ Of course, they may do the opposite for purely political reasons.

enough information to make informed decisions? What if the leaders in a multinational coalition do not or cannot agree? What if the real decisions are going to be made in the US Congress?

Returning to Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), they stated that policy implementation always evolves. What you started out to do will not stay the same and if and when an agreed plan is doggedly stick to, then things can and do go wrong. This implies that the deliberate and inflexible strategies pursued by the IC in Afghanistan are counterproductive; what is really needed is a flexible, adaptive approach, a strategy that ‘emerges’ and one that will be subject to constant updating as new information and research evidence is available: a learning process. Thus the preferred approach and emerging desirable sequence of events ought to be a natural organic process that is continually tested, especially against the ‘do no harm’ benchmark. This in turn will require feedback into the desired policy approach. This requires donors and the host government to be flexible, honest and collaborative. In this context, strategy can never be truly fixed. Lindblom’s ‘science of muddling through’ and its application to the complex world of wicked problems, therefore, has continued relevance and utility to the practice of statebuilding and stabilisation in a complex multinational intervention such as Afghanistan.

The theory behind ‘wicked problems’ suggests that the way we conceptualise problems tends to direct us towards certain solutions. Framing the problem correctly is essential, and then the application of leadership is required to deal with the necessary solutions. This requires some sort of collective process and cooperation. Poorly conceptualised problems can sometimes end up with tame responses.

This research suggests that parties may look at the problem differently but may be coerced into similar responses. The nebulous concept of ‘state failure’ is itself subject to politicisation and easily manipulated by Western nations to suit the intervention. Misunderstanding the problem or shaping the problem definition to suit your predetermined interventions leads inexorably to woolly policy responses. With this lack

of understanding and frequently changing approaches that sought to achieve ‘something’, anything that might look like progress, the IC was destined for failure as measured against its own criteria. Afghanistan is not stable 12 years after the initial intervention.

Complex conditionality such as that set out in ‘Accountability Frameworks’ (AF), such as the TMAF, may actually constrain attempts to resolve some of Afghanistan’s wicked problems. This seems to occur in a number of ways. First, the demands made upon the Government are often in response to the IC’s domestic agendas, whereas if they emerged more from engagement with all stakeholders and citizens in defining both the problems and setting out the possible solutions, this may yield better results. Second, they smack of Western standards of government that seem to label all of the Afghan Government (and its citizens) as corrupt, along with the stigma attached to this; third, they set impossible deadlines to address all these issues, thus building in failure.

A typical response to wicked problems is an increasing focus on greater and greater cooperation and collaboration. Whilst this is in itself generally a good thing, it is not likely to lead to a solution in Afghanistan. Similarly, relying solely on increasing analysis including political economy analysis (DFID, 2009b) and conflict analysis is also not enough, especially if it is continually done by outsiders. It merely restates the familiar position on the problems but provides little in the way of defining a way forward. In such a situation it is unlikely that simple, known ‘traditional’ or normative civil service reform processes will resolve these complex issues. With such a serious problem as how to build state capacity in an FCAS there may be a need to go back to fundamentals as a way to make progress on moving towards a solution.

7.7 The Way Forward: Rebuilding the Capability of the Afghanistan Civil Service

The central research question was “which approach or approaches to civil service and administrative reforms are most unlikely to succeed in an FCAS?” The findings in this research demonstrate that the current approaches will continue to fail unless some serious

corrections are brought to bear. There are a number of critical factors the International Community must get right in order to make progress more widely over the CSAR agenda:

- **Redefining the fragile state** – the need to redefine what constitutes the ‘fragile state’.
- **Dealing with Wicked Problems and complexity** – understand the nature of institution-building in an FCAS as a wicked problem. As a response, recognise the need for emergent, iterative and adaptive development strategies and programmes that can respond to the challenges of uncertainty in the political and institutional environment, along with a concomitant adjustment to aid programmes, IC capability and operational stance.
- **Institution-building is not just capacity development** – there is a need to revisit current approaches to promoting institutional change. This requires a refocus on improving chances of successful implementation as the key benchmark of success and integration into a more coherent PAR agenda. It is not just about capacity development, the solution is one that relies more upon understanding all the interlinked dimensions of administration, legitimacy, representation and authority, and designing programmes accordingly.
- **Undertaking more research** – devoting more funds to research, especially support to in-country initiatives. Break down the barriers to the use of research evidence in FCASs, develop a wider set of indicators to measure the strength of public management systems.
- **Increasing the demand for good governance in Afghanistan and using networking and social media** – promote the demand for good governance and take advantage of the growth in networking and social media to increase that demand.
- **Reviewing the relationship with risk** – more tolerance of error to allow learning to take place.

Redefining the ‘Fragile State’

The WB’s definition of fragile states covers low-income countries scoring 3.2 and below on the CPIA, which is used to assess the quality of country policies and the main input to IDA’s Performance-Based Allocation (PBA) system. There appears little theoretical foundation as to why this should be the normative basis for classifying a state as fragile, especially when you consider the impact that the Bank has on the setting of a PAR agenda. It is, bluntly speaking, crude. It is just one of the many criticisms being levelled at the way the IC addresses the concept of the fragile state. See Ezrow and Frantz (2013) for a recent review.

Certainly, the research uncovered the fact that the language of ‘fragility’ in Afghanistan, with its frequent suggestions of ‘state failure’, ‘grand corruption’, and ‘spoilers’, exacerbates the Afghans’ sense of the West seeking to justify its intervention and imposing its moral judgment upon Afghans. The constant allusion to failure can create and perpetuate a feeling of helplessness. It rankles with many Afghan policymakers who are careful to distance themselves from the epithet. This thesis, for reasons of space, did not include numerous testimonies by Afghan policymakers of the arrogance of Western officials in forever informing the Afghan Government what is the right thing to do.

A second area of interest is in the differentiation of the terms and the need for greater specificity seeking greater differentiation of states by use of measures that can capture the different dynamics of change over time. This can help with understanding better the structures and processes that characterise conflict and fragility in these societies.

The apparent lack of success in preparing for building institutions in peace agreements, early recovery and subsequent major technical assistance projects could be addressed by:

- More tightly defined peace agreements and related conditionality;
- Greater opportunity for citizens to define what sort of government they want in the first place;

- Better definition of transitional plans and required outcomes with realistic timescales; and
- More accurate definition of financing needs and long-term donor commitments.

In particular, the whole notion of ‘stabilisation’ and its accompanying military doctrine will need revisiting given the experiences in Afghanistan.

Dealing with ‘Wicked Problems’ and complexity

With regard to PAR there is a need for a change in ‘mindset’, and to be free from the narrow technical view of the world typified by most approaches to PSR and the obsession with demonstrating immediate results and quick impacts. A new approach might best be typified by governments and their development partners being more frank in their assessment of why certain forms of support to public service development are failing and why, and how to establish a more adaptive approach to respond to shared priorities. This could be best achieved through carefully facilitated discussions, and supplemented, where necessary, with detailed local research, around the themes of political realities, political economy, culture, labour markets, and incentives and disincentives to reform. Much more rigorous impact evaluations will also help. A cornerstone of CSAR has to be a greater focus on improved structured diagnostic work to influence design.

If swift progress is demanded, certain tenets of ‘good public administration’ and ‘good governance’ may have to be postponed for later consideration, requiring honest debate and then choices made as to what major reforms to leave aside. Some less than optimum local institutions and local ways of doing things may need to stay in place for the foreseeable future. CSAR reforms should be calibrated to fit the available development space and avoid excessive or premature recommendations. New formal institutions transplanted from outside can and should ideally coexist with traditional indigenous institutions, recognising the latter’s culture and values (Mamdou Dia 1996).

Rondinelli (1983) had alluded to many of the problems uncovered by this research. He advocated potential solutions based on an approach that is more iterative and adaptive, one that allows space for incremental learning. However, his prescriptions were

scuppered by the very points noted above: a growing addiction to performance measurement, and NPM's focus on VfM and mimicking private sector practices that emphasised the financial 'bottom line', efficiencies and private sector business practices. It is maybe time to revisit Rondinelli's ideas and experiment a bit more. Head (2008) seems to endorse Rondinelli and observes:

The challenge of dealing with 'wicked problems' can best be addressed by recognising that the best approaches will be iterative not definitive, and inclusive not technocratic.

The problems identified with the rational comprehensive approach are well known, but engagement with multiple stakeholders on a complex international mission such as Afghanistan, and the dominance of the military presence, have inadvertently taken the IC back to that rational planning model as if it offers succour and a safe place. Improving the chances of learning by increasing interaction between consultants, researchers, diplomats and government stakeholders, the military undoubtedly could improve the responsiveness of management by the IC to some of these complex problems, as would increasing dialogue around what analytical work and other research is required. Frankly and openly recognising the complexity of the issues might make policymakers more humble and open to alternative approaches. At the project level this means encouraging donors to be less prescriptive, to be open to change and experimental, prepared to learn and adapt projects quickly through speedy feedback into the project cycle rather than wait for the inevitable pre-planned evaluation cycle that involves lengthy procurement cycles to bring in external agents. In such experimental situations, the value of carefully planned 'inbuilt' Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is heightened. Recent contributions to this discussion have come from Pritchett, Samji, and Hammer (2012). Woolcock (2013) has also suggested using more case studies, such as this thesis, as a way to test interventions in complex settings.

Developing common objectives at the strategic level appears to be the priority task as it affects almost everything that follows at a lower level, including the approach to building effective institutions. This suggests that a 'Compact' is the place to start early on, rather than wheeling it out late as a firefighting measure. The 'Compact', is defined as

document containing the key peace and state-building priorities alongside a programme for delivering those priorities and setting a framework for planning, political and security support and development aid programmes.

In order to address wicked problems, a much greater focus is needed on implementation. Implementation is the big hurdle. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) called it the 'implementation deficit'; Andrews et al. call it a 'capability trap'. Implementation of CSAR is riddled with failure partly because of these gaps. Practical suggestions for improvements that emerge from the research include the following:

- Start with a realistic 'Compact', one that is rooted in the local context and is widely supported;
- Support Afghans to decide what sort of a state they want to live in. One way to do this is by 'national dialogue'. A national dialogue is a process of consultation that sets out to explore different points of view on the issues tabled by the participants, in this case: 'what is the most appropriate form of government in a peaceful democratic Afghanistan?' A wide range of participants from civil society, political groups, parliamentarians, intellectuals, academics, NGOs etc. discuss their opinions and proposals and attempt to reach common ground in finding a suitable solution for the future of government as well as identifying potential changes to the constitution;
- The importance of designing an appropriate and strategic mix of long-term funding mechanisms – pooled funding arrangements can facilitate coherent use of resources in pursuit of an agreed strategy and implementation plan. Pooled funding also builds longer strategic partnerships;
- Be more coherent across the PAR reform agenda, not just PFM, and be more explicit about the theory of change¹¹⁴ and the 'art of the possible'; be explicit about what incentives exist for and against CSAR and then address them;

¹¹⁴ The UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) in 2013, with regard to its review of the Arab Spring impact, recommended to the FCO that "The FCO should introduce explicit 'theories of change' into

- Relax and re-evaluate unrealistic timeframes, the Government with future support of donors, should seek to establish a more modest set of service delivery goals;
- Focus on no-cost or low-cost elements of policy implementation;
- Take a steady approach to legislative drafting, with clear priorities; set clear milestones agreed with government and parliament;
- Identify and implement non-legislative reforms, but testing and experimenting identifying what reforms work and why, use case studies to demonstrate effect;
- Simplify management and planning methods, making planning easier and reducing the excessive burden of controls that seek to eliminate all forms of corruption;
- Improving the sharing of knowledge, through inter-agency protocols, by working through and with the host government;
- Address the current problems with aid effectiveness – particularly looking at transparency, mutual accountability and ownership.

Institution-Building is not just capacity development

There is a need to revisit current approaches to promoting institutional change. This requires a refocus on implementation as the key benchmark of success and a more coherent PAR agenda. It is not just about capacity development of institutions and people on the basis that they need to be better equipped to deliver services, even though service delivery may be the best entry point for donor intervention, and Capacity development is an important part of supporting the Government. Engagement with government is usually best achieved through working through and with government systems. The approach however, ought to be one that relies more on understanding all the interlinked dimensions

its country strategies to identify clearly what outcomes it hopes to achieve and how, particularly in the good governance area. It should then measure and report on progress towards outcomes, to produce a clearer picture of overall results” – <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/FCO-and-British-Council-Aid-Responses-to-the-Arab-Spring-Report.pdf>.

of public administration, legitimacy of the central and local government bodies, representation and how it is achieved, and the concept of 'authority'. It is suggested that only by looking at this 'framework' more holistically can one begin to design programmes accordingly. Figure 7.1 tries to capture this new framework. Depending on the findings of the analysis suggested in Figure 7.1, an appropriate response can be designed. For example, if there is little legitimate representation in a local council then it make less sense to promote efficiency and effectiveness.

The framework still has to be applied and will require some skill in doing so.

7.1 Public Administration, Legitimacy and Representation in the Government of a Fragile and Conflict Affected State – a Framework

Perceived legitimacy	Representativeness	Capacity	Authority
<p>» Individual authority: "The Representative Body includes individuals who are accepted by citizens as leadership or authority figures"</p> <p>» Recognised process: "The Representative Bodies at all levels were convened in a way that people see as an acceptable way to form a group which will exercise authority"</p> <p>» Performance1: "The Representative Bodies are seen by people as having successfully advanced their interests including basic personal security"</p> <p>» Performance2: "The Executive Body can deliver the services and public goods expected by the community"</p> <p>» Civil Servants: "Civil servants are appointed on merit, in a transparent manner, patronage is minimised. The circumstances in which there are exclusions to merit based appointments are clear"</p>	<p>» Active selection: "Members of the Representative Bodies were chosen to represent the people by a large number of the people"</p> <p>» Geographical representativeness: "Members of the Representative Bodies are taken from all the geographical areas within the country"</p> <p>» Ethnic and tribal representativeness: "Members of the Representative Bodies are taken from a broad range of ethnic and tribal groupings "</p> <p>» Gender representativeness: "Members of the civil service and the Representative Bodies include a significant number of women with active roles in the different groups"</p> <p>» Balanced representation of the population in the State Administration: "A civil service and wider public service staffing profile that expresses the multicultural, multi-ethnic composition of the country as an important precondition for the acceptance of and for trust in these institutions"</p>	<p>» Development planning capacity: "Both the Executive Body and the Representative Bodies have demonstrated ability to produce summaries of needs and priorities developed at local and national level"</p> <p>» Monitoring and evaluation capacity: "Both the Executive Body and the Representative Body have demonstrated ability to assess the performance of projects and service delivery in the country"</p> <p>» Oversight capacity: "The Representative Body has demonstrated ability to engage with partners including the Executive on their performance and decision-making"</p> <p>» Internal management capacity: "The Executive and the Representative Body have demonstrated ability to manage their internal affairs, including financial management, and decision-making in an efficient manner"</p> <p>» Organisational capacity: "The Executive Body has a vision, a strategy, structure, and sufficient internal capacity, staff and resources, to deliver the tasks expected of them"</p>	<p>» De Jure Authority: "Both the Executive Body and Representative Bodies are working according to existing laws, secondary legislation and local by-laws. These laws are appropriate to the context"</p> <p>» De Facto Authority: "Both the Executive Body and Representative Bodies' authority extends territorially and over all groups in the District. There are no competing administrations – either indigenous or imposed from outside"</p> <p>» Distinction between the Executive and Legislative Function: "There is a clear distinction between government employees who work on public administration and service delivery and those who are political representatives"</p>

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Undertaking More Research

The absence of appropriate and realistic methodologies, frameworks and approaches supporting public administration reform in Fragile and Conflict Affected States negatively impacts upon wider peacebuilding, statebuilding and recovery objectives. Complex development interventions demand better research to draw upon. While there is little locally funded research in Afghanistan, there is no shortage of policy evidence (broadly defined) or recommendations from international advisers. There is an urgent need to engage the Government more, both in generating the evidence and then in using it to improve public sector management. More fundamentally, the Council of Ministers (CoM) and the OAA which supports it can drive greater use of evidence in improving PAR if the CoM is prepared to invest in their decision-making procedures and develop their policy capacity. This latter point emphasises that CSAR cannot be separated from the complementary improvements needed at the point of decision-making in government (upstream) and the need to obtain the evidence from ‘downstream’ activities and then make better use of it.

If there is to be a greater focus on governance then it suggests there is a need to build the Government’s capacity to better design governance structures and delivery mechanisms. This implies that research might usefully focus on further developing a ‘theory of governance architecture’, taking a cue from ‘Enterprise Architecture’, an approach developed to deal with the complexities of issues and performance in the business and IT world. Similarly, perhaps it is also time to resurrect the application of the science of complexity to the exceedingly complex situations in FCASs where development theory collides with military intervention. As a sign of the times that others are taking an interest in the issue of complexity and the need to understand and embrace it, Woolcock (2013, p16) notes:

History is now demanding that development professionals engage with issues of increasing ‘complexity’: consolidating democratic transitions, reforming legal systems, promoting social inclusion, enhancing public sector management. These types of issues are decidedly (wickedly) complex, and responses to them need to be prioritized, designed, implemented and assessed accordingly.

Another potentially interesting area for further research is the impact of the divide between researchers and academics, results-oriented practitioners, donor representatives, military ‘crossover’ tacticians, and diplomats. International development has become infinitely more complicated and it is inconceivable that these parties should continue working in parallel universes. In terms of achieving greater collaboration and improved unity of effort, a whole area of possibilities opens up in terms of research into inter-organisational cooperation, the setting of common objectives and the ways and means of incentivising cooperation.

Systems theory, with its emphasis on understanding interconnectedness, making sense of data and collaboration between disciplines, appears to offer a potentially useful line of research. However, it would be necessary to take care not to fall into the same trap of over-reliance on rational planning, and the problem that, where ‘something cannot be measured’, then it likely cannot be modelled. The links here to aid effectiveness have also been made by Ramalingam (2013), who reprises the arguments around chaos, complexity theory and the evident need for a new approach to managing aid, one that embraces the science of complex systems. Ramalingham and colleagues have also started to examine the role of wicked problems in international development (Ramalingam et al, 2014)

This brings us to the issue of indicators, or metrics as the military like to term it. Donors and the IFIs in particular need to promote more rigorous qualitative and quantitative research on reform impacts, and stimulate external research and internal learning. Having suggested that the current obsession with measuring results is less than helpful, and suggesting that existing indicators are ambiguous and confusing, does not mean that we cannot get better at quantifying progress. The WB (2013) has also recognised this area is in great need of a renewed focus. They suggest that new indicators should be:

- Action-worthy: answering the question ‘which direction is better?’, pointing to the directions of improvement in aspects of government management systems that are relevant for achieving broader development outcomes.

- Actionable: specific enough to point governments towards policy actions that they can take to address the problem.
- Behavioural: capturing the functioning or performance of public institutions, avoiding the fashion trap of best practices which encourage mimicry of specific legal, organisational or institutional forms.
- Replicable: so that the values of the indicators are independent of the actors who are using them to measure the strength of public management systems.

Indicators are also linked to the use of conditionality; theoretically, better indicators will influence what conditionality can or ought to be applied to donor-host country agreements, subject to the ‘appropriate’ use of such conditionality.

Increasing the Demand for Good Governance in Afghanistan

What do Afghans regard as minimum standards in terms of good government? It is not known as the question has not been posed in an accessible way. Without a good government, good governance is a remote possibility. More participatory approaches to understanding would certainly uncover more about the range of possibilities to help increase the demand for good governance in parliament, in civil society and with citizens directly. There are examples around the world of national dialogues producing ‘national agendas’ for government and the public service.

Grindle’s concept of good enough governance offers some utility in setting out a way forward but only if all the stakeholders can reach agreement on what actually constitutes ‘good enough’. International standards and norms have value as indicators and are helpful determinants of what may be ‘good enough’, especially if research can provide more useful and relevant indicators. Good governance is a means to an end, in terms of improving development outcomes, not an end in itself.

This author suggests a slightly more specific definition of ‘good enough’ in a FCAS that can help identify what might be some of the key parameters. ‘Good enough’ is defined as sufficient to reach the Nation’s stated interim goal; it delivers the right kind of

immediate solution and addresses the immediate causes of the problem or issue. Good enough is still en route to a best solution but we cannot justify the time or the cost to go for the latter right now. The 'good enough' solution is relevant to current needs, but still lays the groundwork for better solutions that can be reached in the longer term. Good enough now does not do fundamental harm. Good enough might not stay good enough for ever. Good enough is a snapshot of the solution to a problem at a given time.

The potential role of networking and social media in creating demand for improved institutions of government, and better governance more generally, is slowly being recognised by governments everywhere and there is no reason why Afghanistan could not take advantage of this also. Afghanistan recently held its first ever conference on social media in Kabul. On 25 September 2103, *Afghan Khost News* (Pashto Service) broadcast news of Afghanistan's first ever social media summit, known as 'Paiwand':

The two-day conference discussed the importance of the productive and positive use of social media for the country's sociopolitical and economic development. The event brought together more than 200 participants from all over the country, including some prominent political figures, provided them with the opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas and establish new networks (press release translated by BBC Monitoring Service).

The opportunity is there to take advantage of the huge increase in communications to help Afghans become aware of the choices available to them, and the decisions, behaviours and opinions of others that may influence their ideas of what sort of a state they want rather than being fed the notional Western model. Other possibilities include an increase in transparency and reduced costs of information dissemination, and use of such media could potentially create new ways for administrators to collaborate with citizens.

Reviewing the Relationship with Risk

In an FCAS such as Afghanistan, risk confronts everyone, everywhere: financial impropriety, dangerous places threatening staff and projects, natural disasters, ongoing conflict, political traps, and even the risk that interventions may not work or may have unintended consequences. Political risk analysis is a regular preparatory study for

engagement in an FCAS and most donors also apply strict guidelines on reducing fiduciary risk in their aid programmes.

But taking risks with public funds in a time of austerity is a risky domestic political strategy. Duffield notes that despite what the IC says about taking more risks it does the opposite:

When one looks at the behaviour of international aid workers and donor representatives, however, one sees something different; rather than practising what is preached, there is a widespread retreat from risk and uncertainty. Since the 1990s, in response to the belief that aid work is becoming more dangerous, international aid managers have retreated into the aid world's proliferating Green Zones (Duffield 2013, p.57).

The majority of current literature looks at managing fiduciary risks but perhaps the biggest challenge lies in the way the IC looks at risk across the board, and the need to move away from the culture of 'playing it safe'. If donor staff are penalised for taking risks, for experimentation, then it is unlikely that there will be much progress in FCASs.

7.8 Concluding Remarks

The findings of this research may make depressing reading, more so when one considers that many thousands of people have lost their lives or have been seriously injured in the Afghanistan civil wars and subsequent international engagement. It also may sound disturbing to suggest that the IC has been working in conflict-affected countries for the last two decades without achieving something in the way of building institutions which most would regard as fundamental to ensuring that stable and legitimate governments emerge from conflict. The international efforts that supported a statebuilding and stabilisation strategy in Afghanistan, underpinned by a counterinsurgency plan, assumed that simply directing ever increasing funds and technical assistance would lead to improved capacity in Afghan institutions and a commensurate raising of the legitimacy of the administration of President Karzai. This was a fundamental miscalculation, especially by the US Government. It takes time, lots of it. FCASs are 'wicked problems' par excellence, challenging both the host country and the International Community.

Fukuyama (2011) notes *"in the developed world, we take the existence of government so much for granted that we sometimes forget how difficult it was to create"*.

The abiding interest of most of those working in Afghanistan is to achieve peace and stability. However, the peace can only come through bringing together and aligning the interests of multiple Taliban factions, their linked factions in Pakistan, the multiple political parties and ethnic interests in Afghanistan calculating their ever shifting alliances, the Government and administration of President Karzai (now in place for over ten years but ready to be replaced), and the unsteady coalition of allies that has fought long and hard. Dealing with this has proved too complex. Linking this to functioning government institutions, supported by a modernised public service, to create a 'viable' Afghan state looks next to impossible.

Over one third of the world lives in fragile states; further research can help to tackle fragility and the need to build peace and stability in these crisis contexts. Each little piece of analysis, however modest, helps generate a better understanding of the challenge.

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Appendix A – Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission Projects 2002–12

	Donor	CSC Project Name	Values	Date
1	World Bank/DFID	First Emergency Public Administration Programme (DFID provided \$2.5m)	\$10.9m	2002
2	ADB	Support for PAR	\$2.2m	2003–7
3	KOICA	Public Administration Programme (Infrastructure Development)	?	2003–?
4	EC	Support for Public Administration Reform Under EC Second Reconstruction Programme for Afghanistan AFG/AIDCO/2002/3024/070-285	7 million Euro	Mar. 10 th 2004 – Mar. 9 th 2007
5	UNDP	Support to IARCSC Training and Development Department	\$528,000	Sep. 2004–Jul. 2006
6	ARTF	Afghanistan Expatriate Lateral Entry Programme	\$3m	Sep. 2004–ongoing
7	UNDP	Civil Service Leadership Development (CSLD)	\$3.5m	Jul. 2005–Dec. 2007
8	UNDP	Capacity for Afghan Public Service Project (CAP)	\$9, 084,861	Jan. 2007–Jun. 2009
8	EC	Placement of Afghan Expatriate Professional from EU Countries (AEP) Under decision number 2004/017-064 ‘Sixth Reconstruction Programme for Afghanistan’	€1,499,524	2005
9	ADB	Implementation of Civil Service Law	\$2.6m	May 2006–Apr. 2008
10	World Bank/IAD/DFID	Second Emergency Public Administration Reform (Extension of existing support)	Additional \$2.5m	Jul. 2006–Dec. 2007
12	ARTF	Management Capacity Programme	\$35m	Nov. 2006–Dec. 2010
13	EC	6 th Reconstruction Programme – Support to Public Administration Reform Under decision number 2004/017-064 ‘Sixth Reconstruction Programme for Afghanistan’	€10,468,000	Jul. 2007–Mar. 2009
14	EC	Recruitment of a Team of European Consultants Under decision number 2004/017-064 ‘Sixth Reconstruction Programme for Afghanistan’	€4, 500,00?	2007
16	World Bank	Civil Service Reform Project (CSRP)600	\$6,288,838	Dec. 2007–Nov. 2010
17	World Bank	Civil Service Reform Project (CSRP)601	\$3,172,919	Dec. 2007–Nov. 2010
18	World Bank	Civil Service Reform Project (CSRP)602	\$4,312,717	Dec. 2007–Nov. 2010
19	USAID	Afghan Building Capacity Programme (Proposed)	Estimated \$100m (multi-sectoral: Public, Private and NGO)	2007 for 5 years

20	UNDP	National Institution Building Project (NIBP) (Created out of CSLD and CAP)	\$10m	2009
21	USAID	Afghans Building Capacity (ABC)		
22	USAID/Deloitte	Civil Service Support (ACSS)	\$100m	2010–11
23	MoF-IARCS (World Bank Administered)	Capacity Building for Results (CBR) (CBR was itself partly an evolution of MCP which in turn had been created out AEP and LEP)	\$350m	2011
24	USAID	Afghanistan Civil Service Support Project (ACSS)	\$100m	2011
25	USAID	Governance and Public Administration Project	\$400m?	2013?

Source: G. J. Wilson, Cranfield University. Compiled from a number of sources including AREU publications and project evaluations. Where possible information has been cross-checked but further verification would be needed to produce a definitive list.

Note: ACSS is a continuation of a series of USAID-funded interventions that started with the Afghans Building Capacity (ABC) project operated by Bearing Point that was active in the provinces as well as with the central Government in Kabul. This subsequently became the Capacity Development Programme (CDP) that continued following the acquisition of Bearing Point by Deloitte. CDP was changed to ACSS on 1 Feb. 2010 and in mid-2010 the programme's scope was adjusted to focus primarily on the Civil Service Commission (Afghan Civil Service Support (ACSS) Programme Assessment, 2011, p.6).

APPENDIX B

Participant Information Sheet

Limits to Civil Service and Administrative Reform in a Fragile and Conflict Affected Situation – a Case Study of Afghanistan 2002–12.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study which is part of a student PhD project that aims to look at public administration reform in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2012. In general the research will try to develop a new conceptual framework for civil service and administrative reform, one that recognises the specific problems of a Fragile and Conflict Affected State.

Your answers to these questions will help me seek to analyse and explain why, in the case of Afghanistan, externally motivated attempts to either establish or rebuild public administration systems, and in particular civil service and administrative reforms (CSAR) necessary to support a key stabilisation intervention – the Transition Strategy for Afghanistan 2011–14 – frequently fail to meet their objectives. In particular, I would like to understand how civil service and administrative reforms in Afghanistan have been affected by the challenges associated with the prevailing instability and fragility. Did the design and implementation of civil service and administrative reform operations in Afghanistan contribute to achieving sustainable progress in the development of public administration reform, and has CSAR supported the wider statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives central to supporting the transition strategy for Afghanistan? The research will therefore also seek to understand to what extent, if at all, key civil service and administrative reform either of itself or in tandem with other key PAR processes (such as advances in public financial management) has led to sustainable progress in:

- The development of the public service generally, and
- Improved sub-national operations of line ministries and improved coordination, accountability, and service delivery capabilities in provincial, district and municipal administrations.

Please do read the following information. If there is anything not clear or you wish to contact me, the details are below. I can update you at any time on the progress of the research. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Mr Gregory Wilson, Cranfield University – Security Sector Management, Department of Management and Security, Shrivenham, Oxon England SN6 8LA

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of this research is to analyse and explain why, in the case of Afghanistan, externally motivated attempts to either establish or rebuild public administration systems, and in particular civil service and administrative reforms (CSAR) necessary to support a key stabilisation intervention – the Transition Strategy for Afghanistan 2011–14.

Why have you been identified for an interview?

The participants in this research are all individuals who have a key engagement in development and implementation of civil service policies in Afghanistan. The participants also have an excellent grasp of the complexities of the politics and the problems associated with fragility and all have long working experience and familiarity with the primary objectives of the research.

What does participation entail?

You will take part in an interview that will last a minimum of about 50 minutes but could be as long as two hours depending on the discussions. The following issues will be discussed:

- Background political economy
- Context and legacies
- The role of the donors and donor coordination
- The context of fragility and stabilisation imperatives
- Accountability and oversight
- Approaches to civil service reform
- Approaches to capacity development

All of the interview is recorded for analytical purposes. If you do not want the interview to be recorded just tell me before we start.

What happens to the interview recording?

The recording is turned into a detailed and accurate transcript which I can send you if you wish. The transcripts will be used for the main body of the PhD research. The transcripts will be stored for the duration of the study period. The transcripts and recording will be shared with no one else except myself and certainly not with journalists, politicians and so on.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Before the interview commences I will ask you your opinion regarding confidentiality. Depending on how you respond, your name and position can be marked as confidential and the transcript will be prepared simply describing you as Respondent A, B etc.

What happens if I decide I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

Participation is entirely your choice. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Similarly if you decide at any time not to continue to take part then you only need inform me and all information will be destroyed. It is not necessary to give me a reason.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

Participation is on a voluntary basis and there is no remuneration.

How long will the research last?

The research takes place over two periods of approximately three months. At the same time as interviewing there is a parallel process of gathering other data such as project reports, evaluations, strategy documents, notes of donor–government dialogues and meetings, civil society reports etc. It is anticipated that the final writing-up of the research will be complete before the end of 2012.

Where will the research be conducted?

Afghanistan is the only case study.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

It is not known now whether the results will be published, although of course this may change.

Contact for further information:

Greg Wilson – Telephone: +44 (0)7972 792226 (UK). Telephone: +93 (0) 702 913 643 (Afghanistan). Email: g.wilson@cranfield.ac.uk

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<p>Introduction (explanation for interviewee)</p> <p>Your answers to these questions will help me seek to analyse and explain why, in the case of Afghanistan, externally motivated attempts to either establish or rebuild public administration systems, and in particular civil service and administrative reforms (CSAR) necessary to support a key stabilisation intervention – the Transition Strategy for Afghanistan 2011–14, frequently fail to meet their objectives. In particular, I would like to understand how civil service and administrative reforms in Afghanistan have been affected by the challenges associated with the prevailing instability and fragility. Did the design and implementation of civil service and administrative reform operations in Afghanistan contribute to achieving sustainable progress in the development of public administration reform, and has CSAR supported the wider statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives central to supporting the transition strategy for Afghanistan?</p> <p>The research will therefore also seek to understand to what extent, if at all, key civil service and administrative reform either of itself or in tandem with other key PAR processes (such as advances in public financial management) has led to sustainable progress in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the public service generally, and • Improved sub-national operations of line ministries and improved coordination, accountability, and service delivery capabilities in provincial, district and municipal administrations. 		
<p>Type of Questionnaire</p> <p>Semi-structured, interview process is flexible, emphasis is on how the interviewee frames and interprets events. This focus allows the interviewee to relay and interpret important issues, events, and behaviours. The interviewee is allowed leeway to digress, discuss ‘critical incidents’ and ‘critical events’ (Bryman and Bell 2007).</p>		
<p>Guidance for Administering</p> <p>Introduce the purpose of the questionnaire verbally and describe the content of the information sheet, estimated time of the interview, flexibility within the general interview guide, use of the audio recorder, confidentiality issues, use of the data, follow up if required and thank you.</p>		
Questions	Explanation/Prompts	Application to Afghanistan – analysis and synthesis
<p><u>Background political economy issues</u></p> <p>1. What has been the driving force behind efforts to improve civil service and administrative reforms? What (varying) combinations of driving forces can be observed (domestic leadership interests, driven (imposed?) by the International Community etc.)?</p> <p><i>Follow-up Questions if imposition</i></p>	<p>Was it supply-driven? A Western-style CS? Home-grown?</p>	<p>Was there strong commitment and leadership from (i) the top political level? (ii) from a strong minister for the civil service (initially VP Amin Arsala)? What were the incentives for leaders to take an interest in and promote CSAR</p>

<p>2. Has leadership of the PAR agenda by the International Community caused tensions around the issue of national sovereignty? If so, how have these tensions been dealt with?</p> <p>3. Are leadership and political buy-in necessary conditions for the implementation and success of CSAR reforms? What CSAR rebuilding/reform components require more and which ones require potentially less political buy-in (if any)?</p> <p><u>Legacies and context</u></p> <p>1 Legacies</p> <p>1.1 Have reforms since 2002 built on the Afghan traditions of public administration legacies in terms of CSAR systems and capacity? How are these legacies of the past assessed?</p> <p>1.2 Was the model of reform pushed in Afghanistan a Western model? Has the model of public administration reform in Afghanistan had unexpected or unforeseen problems?</p> <p>1.3 Has the history of Afghan civil service administration had a negative or positive impact on CSAR reforms since 2002?</p> <p>1.4. To what extent have Afghan administrative traditions survived the last ten years of international engagement?</p> <p>1.5 In the initial stages of reform was extensive upfront analytic work needed to guide CSAR reform approaches/tailor interventions to the existing context? Is it necessary and economical for such analytic work to include issues wider statebuilding and political economy considerations?</p> <p>1.6 Is such analysis being used effectively now to inform actual project design and policy dialogue? If so, by whom?</p>		<p>reforms (or to stall on these)?</p> <p>Were achievements continued across changes in leadership of the relevant Ministries – IARCSC and IDLG – or has leadership style and commitment impacted on reform?</p> <p>Was there strong commitment and leadership from (i) the top political level? (ii) from a strong minister for the civil service and local government? (iii) from donors?</p> <p>Gather information on support to CSAR and compare these to CSAR results (as measured by available indicators and by qualitative information).</p>
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<p><u>2 Stabilisation Statebuilding, Transition</u></p> <p>2.1 Did/does Afghanistan have a clear statebuilding vision? Did this mean that Afghanistan was/is more likely to be committed to (re)building/reforming CSAR systems?</p> <p>2.2 Is progress on CSAR fundamentally important for ensuring stability and a sustainable transition? Is political stability achieved through CSAR?</p> <p>2.3. Is sustainability of CSAR reform after 2014 associated with a particular set of priorities and sequence of reforms? Is it possible to identify and agree those reforms?</p> <p>2.4 How does the current security situation affect the development and implementation of CSAR? Does it make it more or less difficult to implement reform? Are there specific characteristics of the current conflict in Afghanistan that negatively affect/undermine the implementation of CSAR reforms? – e.g. corruption, ongoing or re-emerging violence, political turmoil, reintegration of ex-combatants (APRP), political violence.</p> <p>2.5 Is it important that Afghanistan makes progress on CSAR to support a successful transition in 2014?</p> <p>2.6 Has the recent focus on stabilisation and transition compromised progress on CSAR or vice versa?</p> <p>2.7 What prospects are there for accelerating CSAR reforms to support the 2014 transition?</p>	<p>Transition as an end state indicates that certain ground conditions are measurably different from preceding conditions and usually conform to more acceptable standards of governance. Has this happened in Afghanistan?</p> <p>Afghanistan has been subject to ongoing violence and high levels of political instability.</p> <p>In Afghanistan progress may not be uniform and backsliding may be due to a number of factors including changes to security conditions, poor strategy/implementation.</p>	<p>What evidence is there is Afghanistan for slippages in CSAR? What has caused it? Are certain interventions more difficult to maintain? Which reforms are most at risk and why?</p> <p>Specifically address how Afghanistan has dealt with fragility factors and whether some of these factors have undermined or not the implementation of CSAR reforms (and why).</p>
<p><u>Evolving context</u></p> <p>3 Leadership behavior and contextual factors</p>		

<p>3.1. Is it possible to insulate some CSAR reforms from the adverse impacts of low leadership interest/commitment? – e.g. by contracting out certain functions, service delivery or by engaging NTA or external international advisers.</p> <p>3.2 Are some CSAR reform efforts and achievements more resilient to the impact of leadership change (at the political and/or technical levels)? If some are, why is this so?</p> <p>3.3 Are there some elements of CSAR reforms that require a lesser degree of political buy-in because they are less political while others require strong political leadership?</p> <p>3.4 Have there been, or are there now, windows of opportunity for CSAR reforms in Afghanistan? Have these ‘windows’ been seized upon or missed? Were opportunities missed in Afghanistan? If so, why?</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">4 Donor coordination and impact of development aid</p> <p>4.1 Have donors in Afghanistan allocated enough resources to support CSAR reforms? Has this support been consistent?</p> <p>4.2. Is strong donor support and engagement positively correlated to the pace and scope of CSAR reforms?</p> <p>4.3. Is limiting aid volatility crucial to achieving sustained progress on CSAR reforms?</p> <p>4.4 Can donors leverage political commitment to reform (perhaps through conditionality or other incentives)?</p> <p>4.5. Does the use of better-harmonised aid modalities, consistent with the Fragile State Principles and the Paris Declaration, have any impact in terms of reforming CSAR systems?</p> <p>4.6. Most aid in Afghanistan is ‘off-budget’. If more aid (for recurrent and</p>	<p>Donor support has ebbed and waned over the last ten years</p> <p>Development aid is fundamental to development of CSAR in Afghanistan. However the FSP Survey of Afghanistan in 2009 demonstrated that volatile aid, low use of country systems, and poor coordination of aid were having a negative impact on, <i>inter alia</i>, CSAR systems and efforts to rebuild PA systems.</p>	<p>Cross-ref. (i) the level of aid dependency (ii) documentary evidence of whether CSA reforms were harmonised/coordinated among donors, and (iii) perceived level of Afghan ownership.</p> <p>Compare perceived level of adherence with FSP principles (see 2009 Survey results) and compare to CSAR reform achievements. Compile table showing progress on some key governance indicators – check also PEFA and CPIA 13 scores.</p> <p>Analyse the type of support modality used by the IFIs and other donors,</p>

<p>for capital expenditures) was brought ‘on-budget’ would this improve the chances of sustainable improvements in CSAR systems? How could this be demonstrated?</p>		<p>indicate if possibly, triangulating with data from the survey and document review, whether there is a consistent view that a combination of support modalities may lead to greater traction of reforms.</p>
<p>5 Accountability and oversight</p> <p>5.1 Has the Afghan parliament engaged on CSAR issues? Have politicians helped to build/and sustain political commitment for CSAR?</p> <p>5.2. Does donor-driven accountability substitute for, complement or undermine (weak) local institutions and accountability? – especially in highly aid dependent fragile states.</p> <p>5.3. Is there sufficient oversight of CSAR reforms?</p> <p>5.4. Is there a sense that Afghan society is pushing for improvements to CSAR?</p> <p>5.5 How is it possible in the Afghan context to increase demand for good government and good governance?</p>	<p>Political accountability and accountability to citizens may be important aspects of creating support for CSAR reforms.</p> <p>Does the accountability demanded by donors ‘crowd out’ domestic accountability relationships?</p> <p>Deliberately or inadvertently ignoring any part of society in improvements to good governance can undermine political legitimacy – think here particularly of the early days 2002–4 and the lack of engagement with Pashtun tribal leaders in government.</p>	<p>Provision of financing including key salary support mechanisms, CSAR-related conditionality in policy lending, investment lending etc. Some research suggests that intensive TA combined with CSAR-related conditionality may be the best combination of modalities.</p> <p>The research will examine if increasing accountability appears to be associated with increasing support for CSAR.</p>
<p><u>Approaches to reform – detailed Qs for PAR experts with prior knowledge</u></p> <p>6 Key characteristics of reforms and sequencing</p> <p>6.1 Was there ever a clear Afghan strategy for civil service reform and administrative restructuring, supported by the IARCSC?</p>	<p>For the purpose of this analysis, basic CSAR systems and capacities are</p>	<p>To what degree were CSAR basics in place at the ‘starting point’? After five</p>

<p>6.2 Has there been a clear set of goals for public administration pursued by the International Community?</p> <p>6.3 Was CSAR a priority after 2002? Are there particular elements of PAR that leaders emphasised over CSAR such as financial systems?</p> <p>6.4 Post-2002 a set of basic reforms were immediately pursued. These comprised (broadly speaking) a focus on improvements to the working of the centre of government, revisions of the civil service legal framework, support to the new Cabinet, simplification of government, establishment of the IARCSC, merit-based recruitment and salary subsidies to try to create a senior management cadre. Assuming there is general agreement on Afghanistan being a low-capacity environment in 2002 were these reforms the ones most essential to pursue in a fragile and conflict-affected setting such as Afghanistan?</p> <p>6.5 At an early stage in CSAR there was a strong focus on reform and restructuring (2003–5) with a particular focus on restructuring ministries and government agencies in the centre and provinces, and to reform the civil service pay and grading system. Successful efforts at reform and restructuring, that is, significant improvements to operational efficiency and effectiveness, were to be rewarded with Interim Additional Allowances. Did such early efforts at establishing a performance framework ‘work’ in Afghanistan? Would there have been better ways to achieve results? Were the PRR procedures themselves understandable and implementable?</p> <p>6.6 Should it have been a priority to focus more support on sub-national governance early on?</p> <p>6.7 Should legal reforms of the CSAR system (such as the passing of a modern civil service law) be an early step in rebuilding and reforming CSAR? Why did it take so long to pass the CS Law in Afghanistan and why was it changed so much from original drafts? What drives the major legal civil service reforms? Does the current law serve Afghanistan well?</p> <p>6.8 Have some important institutional needs been ignored?</p>	<p>assumed to comprise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - literate staff - staff able to undertake basic admin tasks and basic budget planning - clear legal framework. <p>In early post-conflict situations, merit-based formal appointments procedure may be wishful thinking when the realities of low capacity and existing patronage networks are in place.</p> <p>Major reforms to CSAR legislation are a widespread component of PAR rebuilding and reform efforts generally, especially in post-conflict/transition countries. The questions posed seek to understand (i) what has actually happened and (ii) what has emerged in terms of lessons learned/better or not-so-good practice.</p>	<p>and after ten years?</p> <p>Was the entire range of these ‘basic’ aspects addressed by initial donor-supported CSAR reforms? What level of attention and effort did these basics receive? Was it enough? Should the focus on the centre have been matched by support to local government? Why was their little focus on local government?</p> <p>How successful were early efforts to build the civil service and administration? What were the initial problems?</p> <p>Establish whether there was a missing focus on basics.</p>
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<p>6.9 Has the set of basic administrative capabilities required been achieved in Afghanistan? After ten years of support? If not, why not?</p> <p>6.10 We hear a lot in Afghanistan of the desire to continue to pursue the function of merit-based recruitment but what specific form should it take in Afghanistan?</p> <p>6.11 Is there evidence emerging of what works in Afghanistan in terms of improvements to PSM?</p> <p>7 Approaches to capacity development</p> <p>7.1 One approach to developing capacity has been an extensive reliance on a wide variety of salary support schemes such as CTAP, MCP, Superscale, another might be the establishment of PRTs.</p> <p>7.2 Have such arrangements succeeded? Or have they caused problems? Would more appropriate approaches have worked better? Have they caused distortions? Do you see any future way to transition out of these arrangements?</p> <p>7.3 Has a lack of investment in higher education for public administration hampered CD? Why has there been so little investment in higher education?</p> <p>7.4 What about donor support for the Civil Service Training Institute – has that been focused, effective?</p> <p>7.5 Have we made a success of CD for CSAR? What have been the biggest problems?</p>	<p>In fragile states, the issue of adopting unorthodox approaches emerges as a response to insufficient local capacity or to rapidly increase service delivery. Such arrangements are usually intended to be temporary rather than permanent.</p>	<p>Note traditional approaches to CD and outline any innovative/unorthodox arrangements that have been adopted in Afghanistan. Have they been successful in developing CSAR, and how easy is it to transition out of such arrangements?</p> <p>Describe the situation re. capacity supplementation – benefits, problems, timescales, exit strategies.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">8 Coherence across CSAR and other public sector reforms</p> <p>8.1 How important is coherence across PAR more generally for the successful implementation and sustainability of CSAR reforms? Is PAR coherent?</p> <p>8.2 Has progress on CSAR reforms appeared to have reduced the incidence of corruption?</p> <p>8.3 Does the lack of progress on SNG policy make progress on CSAR reforms more difficult or vice versa?</p> <p>8.4 Has CSAR supported the recent discernible shift of centralised administrative activities from the centre to sub-national levels?</p> <p>Last Questions</p> <p>Do you believe there is a lack of legitimacy of public Institutions in Afghanistan as experienced by Afghan citizens?</p> <p>Do you believe that a significant number of Afghan citizens regard the current Government as illegitimate?</p> <p>Do you feel pessimistic or optimistic that Afghanistan can effect a successful transition in 2014? Will the role of an effective civil service be crucial in maintaining security?</p>	<p>CSAR reforms ideally are coordinated with other complementary PAR, especially</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFM improvements • Anti-corruption efforts • SN governance policy. <p>In effect a de-concentration of government authority, decision-making and operations from the centre to lower tiers of government? If so, have CSARs supported this?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Mapping of CSAR reform and other PAR efforts can help establish whether there is coherence across reform elements.</p> <p>Regarding PFM and SNG – use document review and responses to establish links with CSAR reforms.</p> <p>Examine any critical elements/relationships between CSAR and other key elements of PAR</p>
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APPENDIX D

Consolidated Feedback on Results of Initial Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): including follow-up correspondence

FGD Location: Kabul, Afghanistan

Dates: January–February 2011

Identified Participants: International PAR Consultants and European member states
Representatives for Governance and PAR

Unidentified Other Participants: IDLG and IARCS staff

1 Introduction

Each session was 2–4 hours in duration in addition to informal discussions before and after the sessions.

The FGD concentrated on some general background questions, the particularities of Afghanistan, the strengths and weaknesses of approaches adopted so far, lessons identified, and new approaches to civil service training and capacity building with an emphasis on identifying approaches that have attained some degree of success in the Afghan context. The discussions were free-ranging and areas of interest to the participants were explored as necessary. The initial structured approach was changed due to the seniority of the participants who were more likely to feel constrained by too much direction.

Focus Group Discussions

The focus group discussion tool (FGD) is a suitable tool for use in an integrated strategy to collect information for programme evaluation. It helps us understand practices and project changes as a variety of different stakeholders feel them.

The design is a simple approach based on some questions clustered around current concerns with PAR in Afghanistan as an initial step to help participants reflect jointly. The discussion is expected to elicit positive and negative effects. The discussions were successful in this respect. The exercise fostered discussions about whether current projects influence progress in PAR. The approach is intended to elicit some level of agreement and validation of commonly held opinions concerning the current range of PAR projects.

The secondary objective of the FGD was to gain awareness of the current situation with PAR, in particular listing some lessons learned, current concerns and recommendations for future projects.

Effective focus groups can communicate a desire to obtain meaningful, honest information. If participants make superficial, critical or patronising responses, these can be challenged and/or put into an appropriate context.

Feedback from the participants is being sought in terms of refining the approach in the Afghanistan situation.

2 Thematic Question Areas for Discussion

1. The Afghanistan situation is one of a conflict state, fragile, an exceedingly poor country. But there are many conflict fragile states struggling with PAR. What makes Afghanistan different? What sets it apart from the rest?
2. Are there any areas of intervention where the International Community has been weak and least effective in PAR?

3. Are there any areas of intervention in PAR where the International Community has caused harm to broader peacebuilding and statebuilding objectives?
4. Are there any specific areas within PAR where the International Community chose not to engage in a timely manner? Was this the right or wrong decision? Do they point to bottlenecks and/or limitations with regards to:
 - a. The International Community's choice of partners (state and non-state);
 - b. Form of partnerships (including dialogue and how the International Community works with government to design and implement the PAR agenda, i.e. reform groups with donor representatives designing programmes);
 - c. Donor coordination and whole of government approach; and
 - d. Capacity building and the provision of technical assistance?
5. There is some progress on PAR. Are there any independently verified shining examples of good practice. What are the main success stories in international engagement for PAR. Why were they seen as successful? Are there any lessons that can be drawn? Do they point to any good practices with regards to:
 - a. Choice of partners (state and non-state);
 - b. Form of partnerships (including dialogue);
 - c. Project implementation modalities;
 - d. Aid delivery mechanisms; donor coordination; and
 - e. Whole of government approach?
6. Is the IARCSC capable of managing the PAR Agenda on behalf of the Government – if not, why not? Is there misunderstanding of the concept of Afghan-led project management and implementation?

3 Results

1. **What Makes PAR in Afghanistan Different?**
 - 30 years of sustained conflict; more than a generation lost.
 - Strong connection to fragile neighbouring states (eg Pakistan, Iran). Extremely complex politics in Afghanistan and the region.
 - Extreme skills shortages.
 - Diaspora weighted towards the most talented who are now all across government and politics.
 - Afghanistan never (except in limited areas) had functioning government/institutions. At the centre there was an administration but it was extremely formal; at the periphery

it never really existed. To what extent does the civil service represent the ‘federal’ nature of the population? Does this then require a different methodological approach to PAR?

- Now the focus has been on establishing institutions that give the ‘appearance’ of government. Civil servants do not believe there is a real career structure, transparency and a level playing field, therefore they take what they can, when they can.
- High expectations and increased demand on dysfunctional institutions.
- Overwhelming corruption (post-Taliban phenomenon); reform challenges/destroys sources of income.
- Tribalism and sectarianism.
- Donors have clear political objectives that can push/pull in different directions.
- Post-2002 resource flows; donor irresponsibility in rising too fast resulting in creation of a parallel civil service whose growth is accelerating. No clear or coherent strategy among donors of Afghan government. Plethora of donor organisations; all working to strengthen and improve systems. Overfunded; overwhelms the absorptive and administrative capacity of the Government.
- Low capacity in partners and the need for quick results versus the long-term requirements (results in salaries problems, top-ups).
- Involvement of the military: what is it possible to do in what time? Pressure to increase civilian presence to deliver ‘results’. More is less? Civilians have not communicated what we do and how we do it and the military has attempted to fill the perceived void. NATO/ISAF – are crossing boundaries (a situation that does not exist elsewhere). Need to help military to understand where they can add value and what they should stay out of; quick fixes can be damaging.
- WB World Development Report – lessons learned in capacity building (such as time frames – 20–30 years): rule of law – 40 years.
- Unrealistic desire for speed of growth in a complex legal framework that cannot be managed or met.
- Emphasis on formal procedures rather than outcomes.
- More pronounced problems – perhaps not unique?

2. Interventions/Approaches

- Poor coordination across the board (donors, GIRoA, consultants). Overlaps and duplication in interventions.
- Donors lead too much.
- Support to certain elements in the Government by donors may have been detrimental to others. There is a need to be inclusive so to foster legitimacy.
- Political focus is on security, however, there are other forums for policy dialogue ... where donors ask for too much without assisting in prioritisation.
- Grand words, not translated into a shared vision – leading to piecemeal approaches.
- Fast turnover; constant churn, no institutional memory. Constant reinventing of the wheel.

- Donors wasted ten years trying to find quick fixes to avoid long-term financial commitments.
- Without TA in ministries/institutions, there is no platform to have a meaningful policy dialogue with senior officials
- Regional/provincial level still has very weak capacity – the centre is further ahead (fundamental problems such as literacy). Should support be focused towards this level? Thirty-year problem vs 2014 deadline. We have not focused on the linkages between the various levels of government to a sufficient degree.
- Political influences on appointments based on nepotism and tribalism – huge problem.
- Poorly controlled procurement fuelling corruption.
- Too much money all round.
- Failure to understand how to undertake capacity building (round peg, square hole). No requirement to learn about Afghanistan rather than ‘Little Rock, Arkansas’.
- Too much doing rather than teaching/supporting/mentoring.
- Inappropriate models of public administration applied. Selected tools and methodologies from the ‘West’ are applied here. Not paying enough attention to the evolutionary nature of these processes. Suggestion that application of certain types of consulting approach may make matters worse. Have we really understood the context? Have we expected too much?
- Prioritisation and sequencing flawed but how do you define what support is required, while managing expectations within a realistic framework?
- Intention is not to engage long term; leading to negativity and cynicism. Conclusions that are not based on reality derived from engagement. “We are blinkered, bigoted, jaded”.
- Assumptions that Afghans ‘don’t know’ what to do, but they know exactly what they are doing.
- We have often not understood the needs, so have not helped provide a working solution.
- No common understanding of where we should focus assistance and on what institutions/locations). MoF looking at key ministries – ISAF too focused on districts – need to rebalance our understanding and interventions.
- Poor perceptions of the consultancy industry (TA) – how can it be made more iterative to address long-term thinking rather than chase 12-month contracts and the need to grasp the ‘low-hanging fruit’?
- ‘Good news’ is a reporting requirement at the expense of the truth and can jeopardise the companies/technical advisers involved as well as donors etc. (related to turf wars at home). The International Community needs to show progress at home; we have backed ourselves into a corner to deliver quickly and visibly when the weak administration makes this impossible. We must communicate progress back at home realistically, the focus has been on security in order to address home concerns – we have watered down expectations, such as good governance to good enough governance; has this been a result of the reality in Afghanistan or pressure from home (the conditions for withdrawal for example)?

- 1200–1500 TA in MoE; MRRD – 500, we do not even know. This is taking responsibilities from civil servants ... the opposite of capacity building. Delivery is becoming increasingly reliant on TA. Civil servants are (feeling) marginalised. PAR is undermined by this. Direct hiring of Afghans by donors exacerbates the problem.
- Out-of-control salary regimes, no caps. Afghan civil servants rehired at ‘external’ salary rates. Returning Afghans not returning at all.
- Training focused on numbers not quality.
- Systemic issues that affect staff have not been addressed (e.g. working conditions).

3. Have PAR Interventions Caused Harm?

- Unsustainable, high-cost TA (donor-funded). Serious harm to come when the money runs out.
- No blueprint for reform ... statebuilding in the centre and provinces; if not addressed, harm will accrue.
- There are positives and negatives – is this a matter of perspective? Should we invest more effort to demonstrate success?
- Brain drain has been to a degree reversed by top-ups, but now there is a situation where there is an elite at the top of ministries that have vested interests outside of Afghanistan; what have we invested in the layers below that will have to stay? Very little. Some have become victims of violence, threats (when trying to make real reform – see earlier point about nepotism etc.).

4. Specific Limitations in PAR Interventions.

- Little support for change management.
- Situation too complex, too many variables to manage.
- Serious barriers to implementation at all levels
- No government oversight of how much TA; who was being paid what and by whom (double salaries/double dipping, different donors). Government probably does not know itself what is going on
- Different notions of ‘partnership’ and what that means. Interventions are undertaken without the knowledge of the Government, often not translated into Dari ... and then presented as GIRoA policy; not real partnership.
- Corruption. (PFM/PAR clashes with vested interests ... where is the incentive for reform?) Have we incentivised and encouraged corruption and nepotism instead?

5. Accomplishments

- MoF has developed from a low base in PFM to exceed expectations
- Salary top-ups (incentives) are the only reason for reform success, particularly in view of the structures developed over the last 30 years. Salaries were/are alone not sufficient to support living costs.
- Civil Service Law is NOT a success story.

- Individual examples of good relationships and cooperation – slow and limited. Whole of Government/CS has been poor. No target, no real vision or critical path – difficult to identify and achieve success. It is a start ... but should more have been expected?
- Human-level change, yes. But institutions and organisational change – no, that is much harder.
- Training – University of K/U of Washington State graduation in PAR, now placed graduates in Government. Good but the rest of support to higher education is pitiful
- Fragility: anecdotally, gains are being lost. Where small groups have made progress, they have the risk of being dragged back down. Positive trends must be identified and supported.
- Those that have made progress want to leave due to the inertia around them.
- Afghans have a good work ethic – which needs direction.
- Education/NSP can be cited as successes.

6. IARCSC Capability

- Little management capacity.
- Providing resources in spite of poor performance has not incentivised reform.
- No influence from IATCSC. PAR is not held at a high enough level (should be on a par with defence/security). Reform agenda is not led capably at the centre of government nor in the IARCSC.
- Ministry counterparts are not capable of implementing the CSC reform programmes. No administrative skills – no delineation between admin and politics.
- Reputation of the Commission has deteriorated, seems to have fallen (merit-based recruitment failures). The perception is that since 2006 the IARCSC has steadily declined, confusion, too much donor money, loss of direction.
- Strong resistance to outside oversight
- IARCSC sees current TA (consultants) as an extension to their own staff, very poor understanding of the use of TA.
- IARCSC does not lead by example; recruitment, corruption.
- No vision, still does not have a strategic plan.
- Good initiatives fizzle out, no follow-through.
- Problems with poor communication.
- ACSI – good feedback; perceived as having potential. Training is not always connected to the practice in ministries.
- Perception is that current individuals make a good living out of the current situation.
- Need to reduce overstaffing.
- Confusion over what is meant by ‘Afghan-led’ – donors should vet and approve finances much more closely.

7. The Way Forward

- GIRoA needs to look beyond 2014 and the relationships it needs for the future. The Government has its own model that is more aspirational than practical – adjust expectations.

- Raising capabilities is the key, but training must be relevant. Help the ACSI to revise its curricula to fit with ministry systems.
- Backing should be provided by high-level actors within home departments.
- Increase the focus on tertiary education.
- Develop a longer-term approach
- Improve coordination mechanism (between donors at all levels).
- Clarify development needs vs training needs
- Build long-term relationships – nine years of short-term intervention has had limited impact.
- Greater focus: targeting on an individual basis on a one-to-one scale.
- Communications: communicating the evidence of progress will help to steer the debate.
- Focus on improving policy dialogue with Government on PAR:
 - Back to basics, clarify incentives to improved dialogue
 - Get the analytics rights
 - Donors need to engage more, more openly political engagement is sometimes required. Greater alignment amongst donors; pulling back the institutional relationships with beneficiaries
 - Policy dialogue ... Member state/EUD advocacy? Political leverage? PAR needs to sit at a higher level and as a higher priority. What is PAR, do we agree it is a priority? Common understanding is needed
 - Make sure that interventions are part of the bigger picture and align with existing/planned initiatives (raising budget execution/service delivery)
 - Donor-facilitated SWOT analysis to understand what/why PAR. Clarify how we engage the Government
 - What is the policy debate that we need to have – perhaps a focused forum, rather than broad strokes
 - Develop islands of excellence/stability
 - Align PAR with political imperatives
 - Stop piecemeal approach
 - Elevate policy on PAR out of the Commission
 - Donors have to say – we want a policy discussion on x and then follow it through
 - Tie real political commitment to NPPs
 - Clarify what ‘progress’ means and how we can measure it – current indicators measure little.
- Need to relate civil service training to service delivery:
 - Clarify what we mean by service delivery in Afghanistan
 - What is service delivery in the Afghan context; what are the expectations of the citizens of Afghanistan?
 - Reduce capital-centric approach. Improvements in SNG providing better service delivery; connecting local populations to government in a positive way. Allied with merit-based appointments; conditionality

- Identify and agree which services are important
- Deal with corruption
- Strengthen project implementation structures; steering; management.
- Education for PAR:
 - PAR is broad; focus on one area: tertiary education related to PA. In-depth, in Dari. This will support innate enthusiasm
 - Importance of sharing ideas about higher education within government
 - Increase focus on higher education, strengthen links to graduate programmes
 - Analyse and clarify the differences between training, development and education
 - Improve the HE infrastructure for PAR.
- Future of technical assistance
 - Increased accountability
 - We have identified TA as Afghan-led (substitution) – we need to look ahead and imagine what happens when majority of TA is gone.
- Regional/provincial institutions have to improve capacity. More interaction from the centre with the provinces.

8. Other Issues

- Integration of Taliban into the public service a future issue.
- Need greater clarity on what are the incentives for reform.
- Need for a review of project modalities? What delivery mechanism works? Afghan-led has failed, why? Mainly poor admin and financial management. Afghan-led in terms of content, but delivery, management of donor assets/funds should be at most a cooperative arrangement; mutually vested powers and interests. Conditionality should be increased. Moving to 50% of donor funds on-budget will multiply problems ... although it may build capacity at the same time. (DDP has been slow but on-budget and has forced the local administration to find solutions.) On-budget support forces some elements of coordination.
- TA in the right places to assist delivery (at the local level).
- Where do we focus to maximise returns for our investments rather than avoiding difficult issues? How can we build accountability and collectively agree the areas of focus? How is national ownership generated, aligned and maintained?
- Without local buy-in, we are wasting our time and money – we must then identify what we wish/need to support.
- Systematic means of communicating with partners. The process should be formalised
- What are the incentives? What does the Government want? Just to stay in power? Improving legitimacy through better service delivery?

Participants

Ute Merx	GIZ
Helmut Fischer	German Embassy
Elena Clemente	Italian Embassy
Mancim Kryzanowski	Polish Embassy
Paul Tholen	Netherlands Embassy
Rimvydas Kriukelis	Lithuanian Embassy
Aislin Baker	DFID
Emanuel-Jose Amaral	EUD

Consultants

Steve Masty	Adviser to the Minister, MAIL
Ian Doig	Team Leader, EU Justice Sector Reform Project
Bill Pitkin	Adviser, EU Justice Sector Reform Project
Pierre Fallavier	Director, AREU
Dr Sayed Moh. Shah	Research Director, AREU
Dr Ebrahim Afsah	Policy and Strategy Advisor, Deloitte Consulting LLP
Pierrick Le Jeune	Policy and Legislation Adviser to the Director of Legislation and Policies/CSMD/IARCSC, Deloitte Consulting LLP
Clive Parry	Senior Adviser, EU Justice Sector Reform Project
Liz Anne McBride	Senior Adviser, DM Policy MoF
Raj Kamal	Project Manager, National Institution Building Project, UNDP
Graeme Jackson	PAI, Pay and Grading Consultant IARCSC
Jesper Andersen	DANIDA Senior Adviser, Ministry of Education
Tomas Kennedy	Adviser to IARCSC
Gabriel Kroes	Human Resources Adviser (MoPH), AusAID
Susan Loughhead	Deputy Director, Governance, DCOS Stability, ISAF
Nicci Lee	Senior Stabilisation and Governance Adviser, ISAF

A separate session was held with participants from IARCSC. The attendees are not named for reasons of confidentiality.

Some Subsequent Feedback (samples only)

Participant A

Of course I have used focus groups before and I was taught to use somewhat smaller groups (7–8 participants) than yours, so I was uncertain what to expect when the session began. If I have a recommendation, our facilitator might have been slightly more active in teasing out responses from each participant (some of them, myself included, probably talked too much and others less) but judging by the one session in which I participated, your exercise was a brilliant success. The group was insightful, broad-based and representative of adviser perspectives; rather clear conclusions were reached without any forcing by the facilitator; and, judging by what people said, the other groups performed equally well and the results collectively show strengths and severe weaknesses in donor (and others') perceptions. Yours was a tour de force of policy research in terms of participant selection, grouping, facilitation, participation and information extracted: it cut the Gordian knot of what's going wrong. I am eager to read your report. Had you been asked to conduct this exercise every year since 2001, the Afghans would be far closer to building a functioning government and a stronger economy, and literally billions of donor dollars might have been far better spent.

Participant B

Although participation could be deemed as being voluntary – the social pressure may influence the ‘voluntary state of mind’ that are required. To be selected for a FGD in many ways are viewed as a status symbol for Afghans and as such might skew the openness and honesty required during feedback received in FGD. It is also known that for Afghans it is very difficult to admit having made mistakes, especially in front of others – so individual discussion would probably provide more sincere opinion than FGD.

I would therefore have more faith in structured or semi-structured interviews with individuals than the feedback from FGD. It might be helpful to use the ‘Others have stated 1.) and 2.)’ during the interviews in order to incorporate some of the dynamics from FGDs into individual interviews.

Confidentiality maybe requested during FGD, but all members know that whatever is said will be heard by all the other members of the FGD. Again within the context of Afghanistan where lack of integrity and understanding of this ‘confidentiality’ is so difficult it will affect the openness of feedback. Afghanistan is loaded with personal agendas and it is not very difficult to understand why. So again it would probably be easier to establish reliability of information through an individual semi-structured questionnaire.

Professional competence of facilitators for FGD's might be difficult if ‘outsourced’ - this will however also be a problem in the structured individual questionnaire.

Participant 3

I thought the sessions were useful, well managed and effective. Maybe we could have got some more depth if we could have had a break for lunch, some informal discussion and then an afternoon session to reflect on the findings. I thought the break-out group idea effective as people feel happier to contribute in smaller groups. It could also have been a useful round-up to go round the table and ask for any last comments to ensure all ideas have been mopped up. Although it was semi-structured with headings another option might have been to use mind mapping. Peter and I recently did this to try to create a model for statebuilding which was very effective and we intend to develop the model further. Mind mapping also helps to ensure issues and questions are not forgotten.

Appendix E Summary of Conditionality Linked to Civil Service and Administrative Reforms in Afghanistan (as at 2012)

Tokyo Conference Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) – Government Commitment	International Monetary Fund (IMF) Enhanced Credit Facility (ECF) Structural Benchmarks	World Bank ARTF Incentive Programme 1391–93
Signed July 2012	Agreement signed November 2011	MoU Signed July 2012
<p>Preamble:</p> <p>The Afghan Government and the IC (hereafter “the Participants”) met on 8 July 2012 in Tokyo to reaffirm and further consolidate their partnership from Transition to the Transformation Decade. The Afghan Government and the IC are to monitor performance for five major areas of development and governance according to the modalities described below.</p>	<p>Prior Actions and Structural Benchmarks (incl. all 4 reviews)</p> <p>The IMF Extended Credit Facility (ECF) provides financial assistance to countries with protracted balance of payments problems. The ECF supports countries’ economic programmes aimed at moving toward a stable and sustainable macroeconomic position consistent with strong and durable poverty reduction and growth¹¹⁵.</p>	<p>The objective of the MOU:</p> <p>Strengthen the partnership between Afghanistan and the Administrator by providing a framework for the collaboration with Afghanistan’s implementation of the Incentive Programme discussed within the ARTF Incentive Programme Working Group. The MOU also seeks to provide a framework for the Administrator’s collaboration with the monitoring of Afghanistan’s performance under the Incentive Programme.</p>
<p>Representational Democracy and Equitable Elections</p> <p>Goal: Conduct credible, inclusive and transparent Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 according to the Afghan Constitution, in which eligible Afghan citizens, men and women, have the opportunity to participate freely without internal or external interference in accordance with the law.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Develop, by early 2013, a comprehensive election timeline through 2015 for electoral preparations and polling dates; and o Ensure that a robust electoral architecture is developed in a secure, participatory and transparent manner to enable successful and timely elections. 		
<p>Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights</p> <p>Goal: Improve access to justice for all, in particular women, by ensuring that the Constitution and other fundamental laws are enforced expeditiously, fairly</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Anti-Money-Laundering (AML) Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT)</p>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/ecf.htm>, accessed 18 October 2012.

<p>and transparently; ensure that women can fully enjoy their economic, social, civil, political and cultural rights; fight against corruption, including strengthening counter-narcotics efforts; and improve the capacity of state institutions.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure respect for human rights for all citizens, in particular for women and children, and allow the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and civil society organisations to perform their appropriate functions; o Demonstrated implementation, with civil society engagement, of both the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (EVAW), including through services to victims as well as law enforcement, and the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA) on an annual basis; and o Enact and enforce the legal framework for fighting corruption including, for example, annual asset declarations of senior public officials including the executive, legislative and judiciary. 		<p><u>Civil Service Reform (CSR)</u></p> <p><u>Externally Financed Salaries (EFS) guidelines: MoF and the Civil Service Commission (CSC) issues guidelines with recommendations on EFS salaries and allowances to Donors. As part of the benchmark, MoF and CSC establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism for EFS salaries and allowances in consultation with the ARTF Administrator.</u></p> <p><u>1392 (2012) Benchmark on Civil Service Reform: The Council of Ministers approves amendments to the civil service law. The Authorities will provide the Administrator with the cabinet-approved civil service law as well as the cabinet minutes, confirming the approval. The Administrator will review the law for compliance with minimum standards.</u></p> <p><u>1393 (2013) Benchmark on Civil Service Reform: The authorities issue relevant regulatory instruments which enable the recruitment of professional staff – The Administrator will review and verify issuance of the regulatory instruments.</u></p>
<p>Integrity of Public Finance and Commercial Banking</p> <p>Goal: Improved integrity of public financial management and the commercial banking sector.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Implement the government programme supported by the International Monetary Fund on schedule; continue to enforce asset recovery and accountability for those responsible for the Kabul Bank crisis; and strengthen banking supervision and reforms through Da Afghanistan Bank; o Implement Public Financial Management Action Plan and improve the management of public funds as measured by Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment by 20% and raise 	<p>Commercial Banking</p> <p>Central Bank – Agree a memorandum of understanding on the Central Bank’s capitalisation</p> <p>Approval by the Supreme Council of Da Afghanistan Bank of the new organisational structure of the Financial Supervision department</p> <p>Reduce the number of branches of Kabul Bank</p> <p>Cabinet to approve Privatisation Plan for New Kabul Bank. The Bank to be offered for sale. In-depth public inquiry to examine events leading to Kabul Bank crisis</p> <p>Submit to Parliament new or amended Banking Law</p> <p>Strengthen AML/CFT regime by implementing an Action Plan</p>	<p>Public Finance Management</p> <p>External Audit Performance and Internal Audit</p> <p>Procurement Performance</p> <p>Budget Transparency</p>

<p>the transparency of public funds measured by the Open Budget Initiative (OBI) to more than 40%; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Implement the recommendations from the Financial Action Task Force Asia Pacific Group regarding anti-money-laundering and combating terrorist financing. 	<p>Prepare legislation on marketable debt instruments</p> <p>Prepare a road map with a strategy to build capacity and improve the institutional framework to respond promptly to economic crime. Establish Economic Crimes Task Force</p> <p>Prepare and agree legislation bringing Public Enterprises under effective monitoring and oversight of the MoF</p> <p>Two new border crossings modelled on Hairatan Border Crossing Point – separation of ABP and ACD</p>	
<p>Government Revenues, Budget Execution and Sub-National Governance</p> <p>Goal: Improve the Afghan Government’s revenue collection and capacity of line ministries’ to develop and execute budgets accountable to, and incorporating, local needs and preferences.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Through more efficient, transparent and accountable customs and tax systems, raise the ratio of revenue collection to GDP from 11% to 15% by 2016, and to 19% by 2025; o Improve budget execution to 75% by 2017; o <u><i>Enact a legal framework to clarify roles, and responsibilities of government agencies at national, provincial and district levels, in line with the 2010 Sub-National Governance Policy</i></u>; and o Develop a provincial budgeting process that includes provincial input into the relevant Ministries formulation of budget requests, linked to a provincial planning process in which Provincial Councils have their consultative roles. 	<p>Government Finance</p> <p>Submit a VAT Law</p> <p>Afghanistan Revenue Dept to identify Medium and Small taxpayers</p> <p>Prepare legislation with regard to the income tax law, minerals law, oil and gas (hydrocarbons), law and customs code</p>	<p>Sub-National Finance</p> <p>Norm-Based Budget Allocations</p>
<p>Inclusive and Sustained Growth and Development</p> <p>Goal: Achieve inclusive and sustained growth through a focus on human development, food security, private investment, and decent work and employment opportunities and the improvement of ranking in the human development index.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure adequate resource allocations to achieve 		<p>Investment Climate and Trade Facilitation</p> <p>Business Licensing</p> <p>Trading Across Borders</p> <p>Customs</p>

<p>Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets for health, gender, education, environment and food security and use of MDG indicators to measure progress;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Strengthened enabling environment for the private sector, as measured by the World Bank Doing Business Index, including development of an Extractive Industries Development Framework that governs Afghanistan's natural wealth through an accountable, efficient and transparent mechanism which builds on and surpasses international best practices; o Encourage and support regional economic initiatives by leveraging investments in the agriculture sector and resource corridors as primary drivers of growth; and establish Road, Rail and Civil Aviation Institutions; and o Take steps necessary to achieve World Trade Organisation (WTO) accession by the end of 2014. 		
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Source: Compiled from various sources, Greg Wilson, Cranfield University 2012